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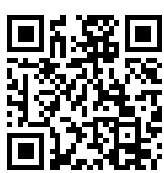
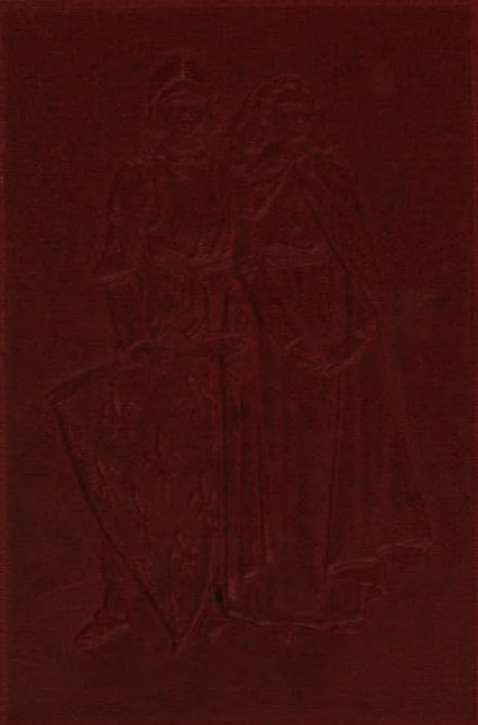


# THE ROLL-CALL OF SERVING WOMEN



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*Photo*] [*Sport & General.*

SCENES ON A CROSS-CHANNEL STEAMER.

Two nurses, English and French, who were in Brussels when war broke out. They were taken prisoners when the Germans entered Brussels, and forced to nurse German wounded. The nurses escaped from Brussels in disguise, and walked to Ghent, where they took train to Ostend. After a short stay in England they went back to assist in the Red Cross work in France.

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# THE ROLL-CALL

OF

# SERVING WOMEN

A RECORD OF WOMAN'S WORK FOR
COMBATANTS AND SUFFERERS
IN THE GREAT WAR

BY

MARY FRANCES BILLINGTON

LONDON
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY
4 BOUVERIE STREET & 65 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, E.C.
1915

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27/3/12

DEATH OF MISS BILLINGTON.

Miss Mary Frances Billington, for many years a member of the staff of the "Daily Telegraph," and one of the pioneers among women journalists, died in London yesterday.

She travelled a great deal during her professional career. She had an intimate knowledge of Russia, and on two occasions made visits of investigation to India, being specially interested in the position of women there.

During her illness she received many inquiries from the Queen, who sent her a gift of flowers.

PREFACE

WHEN the storm of war broke over Europe, all unexpected in its swift and terrible outburst, women realized a sense of impotence that they had never felt before. It was, however, a most transient attitude of mind, and in its place there came the calmly confident desire to render service in whatever way might be most useful. In those first days of August none could have foreseen the many openings that there would be for womanly help, nor how the State, as well as private and voluntary effort, would call upon them to bear a part that would be a contribution to ultimate victory, as important in its degree as the actual taking-up of arms.

No future history of the war can be complete without full recognition of how the activities of women sustained the civil fabric. That they would respond with unfaltering devotion to the duties of caring for the sick and wounded none had any doubt. But beyond that they willingly assumed new responsi-



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bilities, new tasks. They supplied of freewill clothing not only in shirts, socks, and belts for the troops to an extent that relieved commercial strain, but for the hospitals, the poor, and the sufferers of sorely-stricken Belgium. They made themselves sisters and friends to the anxious mothers and wives of the brave men at the front. They were ready to take any work that would release a man for the fighting line, and at this moment are only beginning a vast reinforcement of industry for providing the munitions of war.

It is well that a record should be made of the valuable and splendid work that they have done. Much of it has had no more permanent chronicle than in the columns of the newspapers, where such statements are buried in

> The daily deepening drift
> Of the all-recording, all-effacing files.

In the pages of the nursing journals, where they have met few save professional eyes, are simply set down the fine narratives that are representative of dozens more that have not been committed to paper, wherein women for brave men's lives have fought with death and dulled his sword. Scattered up and down the semi-private issues of hospital magazines are stories that ought to be more widely known.

My own work on *The Daily Telegraph* has brought me into direct personal touch with all the chief move-

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ments of women in connection with the war, whether these have been philanthropic, industrial, or social. By the exceeding courtesy of the Proprietors and Editor I am permitted to make use of quotations from various articles I have written in these columns, and in other instances I have written afresh of events and happenings of which special study has been made. Looking back on the first ten months of the greatest struggle of the world's history, when the barbarities of the enemy towards defenceless women and children are among the foulest blots on civilization, one appreciates with an even higher sense of its supreme value the courage with which mothers and wives and lovers gave their nearest and dearest, the ordered quiet of their lives when any moment might bring heart-breaking tidings, and the love and the service that they consecrated in their several ways to the Empire.

MARY FRANCES BILLINGTON.

LONDON, *June* 1915.

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# CHAPTER I

## THE BURSTING OF THE STORM-CLOUD

**Some signs and portents—A season of fantastic exaggerations—Days of suspense—A strange Bank Holiday—First thoughts.**

EVERY life that is at all beyond the stage of early youth is divided by the outbreak of the war into two phases. There is for each the "Before" and the "After." The line that cuts between stands out clear and unforgettable. On August 4, 1914, the old things were left behind, and the history of civilization entered upon a new period. It is a date that every woman will remember, for it altered the whole perspective of her existence, placed new values on every detail of personal, domestic, social concern, and brought her face to face with conditions that it had seemed could never arise.

There will assuredly be those who will tell us we ought to have foreseen what was coming in the strange waves of restlessness, demands for excitement, the rage for garish colourings, the amazing eccentricities of fashion, the extravagance in all forms of luxury, and the aberrations of futurists and such weird manifestations of perverted taste. They will remind us that these signs and portents preceded both the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. But the average woman seldom brings the historical sense



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to bear on her readings of what is taking place immediately around her. She is satisfied to accept the general tendency of a fashion, reserving the right to restrict her dressmaker not to carry it to excess. A "freak" entertainment at a palatial restaurant has no further meaning for her than a somewhat foolish misuse of money by people who possess that in greater degree than common sense.

A London season was drawing to its close. It had run a very normal course as far as its social side was concerned. The two most disquieting factors in politics had barely affected it. "Civil war in Ireland" had of course moved many, especially among those more or less directly associated with the Sister Isle, but it may be doubted whether the majority of quiet folk really viewed it as a serious possibility. The fact, too, that they did not do so led some into strong expressions of feeling that as a people we were losing our power to think, or to face beforehand a serious situation. But even then we saw the formation of women's detachments for rendering first aid which were to go to Belfast at an hour's notice, ready to help the nursing of Ulster Covenanter and Nationalist alike.

To those at home the violence of the extremists among the militant suffragists was perhaps a more present trouble. Mrs. Pankhurst and the leaders of the movement were in and out of prison under what they had designated the "Cat and Mouse" Act. Others were going from one form of violence to another, setting fire to churches and houses, and damaging the nation's most treasured art possessions. They invaded private entertainments to air their views, and it is currently believed that certain great houses gave no parties lest these unwelcome intruders should force

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their way in to "make a scene" or destroy their property.

None the less there had been the usual dinners and dances, concerts and bazaars. A great deal of hospitality was dispensed through the restaurants, and there were those who saw in that a decline of the English domestic traditions. There were several very large semi-public fancy-dress balls, and these perhaps focussed as much as anything certain of the tendencies that were giving the sane and sober-minded some causes for uneasiness. Feminine costume ran in directions of exiguousness or transparency that certainly betokened a lack of the innate modesty we had believed to be an attribute of English womanhood. An indiscriminate division of "gifts" appealed to the gambling sense, and altogether their atmosphere was exotic and ominous.

A short-lived phase of night-clubs was another feature of the season. The more exclusive and discerning of women of course shunned them absolutely; but their attractions were sufficiently belauded by certain sections of the less responsible press to induce those who would define themselves as "smart" and "daring" to make their acquaintance, and for a time their proprietors—in many instances Germans—throve exceedingly. Not less significant was the attendance of women at boxing contests, and the reasons alleged in defence of their presence. Apparently they went from some sort of a recrudescence of the spirit that took women to the gladiatorial fights in Rome—an unhealthy worship of physical brute force.

Thus we came to the last weeks of July. Holiday plans had been made. The wealthier people were going to Cowes and on to Scotland. Families had

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chosen the seaside resort they would visit. That vast army of independent men and women, the latter belonging to so many callings that they have entered or created—that company of inspectors under the Home Office, the Local Government Board, the Infant Life Protection Act, and County Councils, artists, musicians, teachers, a sprinkling of journalists—had planned the continental tours or the pleasure cruises they would take.

Since the murders of the Austrian Grand Duke and Duchess at Sarajevo the newspapers had indeed talked of grave things. There was a distinct act of war on the part of Austria towards Serbia during the last week of July, but no one imagined that the strained state of affairs in these regions could possibly be going to affect their own holidays. How in the world could it do so? Even when Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey were uttering words more solemn and more charged with warning than this generation had ever heard—the former saying on July 30 that the conditions were almost unparalleled in their gravity, while the latter even then could say that the great object of preserving the peace of Europe was still engaging them—few indeed there were that realized how near we were to the greatest war the world has known.

Up to the 1st of August there were thousands who believed that their Bank Holiday would be the same as that of any of the years before. They hastened to the stations, hoping to have at least a few days away, only to realize the beginning of a general dislocation of the train services. Still, some of the nearer coast and inland resorts were reached, though there began to be a sense of uneasiness, a bewildering feeling that the next few hours maybe would see some great cata-

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strophe! What it would be the average feminine mind hardly formulated. If it were war, where would the first clash of arms be heard?

A Sunday of most tense strain followed. Usually the first Sunday in August sees the London churches very empty, while at the seaside and in the country many holiday-makers think it justifiable to be lazy and indifferent. But comparatively few had left the Metropolis, and every one wanted such scraps of news as were to be gleaned. Buckingham Palace was the goal, it seemed, of half the population; and the appearance of the King and Queen on the balcony in the evening was the beginning of a series of loyal demonstrations which showed in no uncertain measure the attitude of all classes in support of a firm and unfaltering policy against oppression and arrogance.

How the Bank Holiday passed few have any clear impressions. But people did not go to the parks or the museums. The evening amusements failed to attract them. Fleet Street was never so busy on a first Monday in August, for the newspaper offices were all at the highest pitch of anticipation. Trusted and responsible members of the staffs of the great dailies, whose holidays were to have been taken during the month, were recalled at an hour's notice. Moreover, there were crowds of people who seemed to imagine if they were in the heart of the world of newspapers they might hear more quickly what was moving. They wandered up and down, they talked over such scraps of information as one and another managed to glean, and all the while there was the oppressive all-pervading sense that the war had become inevitable. Not till many weeks later did we fully realize how even in those last moments Sir Edward Grey had striven for peace.

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The next day the storm burst, and it bore down upon us with a crushing, overwhelming sense that all the world as we had known it was swept aside. Before us loomed the unknown, with vague fears that most women rather hesitated to attempt to think out into concrete shape. For very few had any real conception, as we realize after these months of fighting on land and sea and in the air, of what war really was. Even now we English women do not know it in the sense that the women of Belgium and along the French frontier have seen it. Only the oldest had heard at first hand from aged relations long ago what had been the fears and anxieties of the Napoleonic invasion; and it was hard to comprehend that, unless our Navy held the seas, there would be hordes of ruthless soldiery in our midst ere many weeks were out.

When the first clear perception came that the nation was at war, it was difficult to adjust the personal relation to it. Certainly there would be no August holiday. With the families of boys and girls home from school, that alone was a somewhat staggering first sense of change. Where there were sons or other relatives in the Army, there was the wonderment what regiments would be first for service in the field. All sorts of domestic problems ran through the mind. Would there be a scarcity of food? what should we be obliged to forgo? would prices go up in alarming degree?

The day wore to its end, somewhat cool and without much sunshine. There was only one subject of conversation, and none could afford much enlightenment upon it, for none knew how or where the guns would speak first. Late editions of the evening papers were bought as fast as they appeared, in the hope that they

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might tell something actual, something definite. To go to bed with a sense that we were at war, but to know nothing of how the dreaded intangible abstraction would take shape, seemed impossible. There were other results. Women—yes, and men—prayed that night who had not called on God for many a long year. They felt then the need of the Almighty protection, and to some there came the comforting recollection of a verse: "I will lay me down in peace and take my rest; for it is Thou, Lord, only that makest me to dwell in safety."

Another thought came into those quiet evening reflections. We had been at war often before, and, by the goodness of God, the needed guidance and help had come to us through great men and wise men, and our own dogged and indomitable powers. We could not all express it in the best way, but it was none the less true, however dimly comprehended. "And now behold from their martyr graves, Russell, Sidney, Eliot arise, and with phantom fingers beckon England on! From the fields of their fate and their renown see Talbot and Falkland, Wolfe and de Montfort arise, regardful of England and her action at this hour. And lo! gathering up from the elder centuries a sound like a trumpet-call, clear-piercing, far-borne, mystic, ineffable, the call to battle of hosts invisible, the mustering armies of the dead, the great of other wars, Brunanburh and Senlac, Cressy, Flodden, Blenheim, and Trafalgar. Their battle-cries await our answer—the chivalry at Agincourt: 'Heaven for Harry, England, and St. George!' Cromwell's war-shout, which was a prayer, at Dunbar: 'The Lord of Hosts! The Lord of Hosts!'—these await our answer, that response which by this war we at last

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send ringing down the ages, 'God for Britain, Justice, and Freedom to the World!' "

That was the spirit in which, as a people, we met the night of August 4, when for the first time for just upon a century Britain engaged in a great European war to be waged at her shores—even, for all any of us then knew, on her own very soil itself.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE FIRST DAYS OF WAR

**Household experiences—Hoarding food—Passing of panic—Early news from Belgium—The calm spirit—Allowances for soldiers' wives and children—Women's first efforts in Belgium.**

THE four week-days that followed the war brought some strange experiences. For financial reasons, the wisdom of which we understand at this stage—to many women they then seemed altogether unfathomable—the Treasury declared that the Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday were to be regarded as Bank Holidays. Of course it was not intended that this order should apply to the retail shops, but with the restricted facilities for obtaining money business could only be carried on to a very limited degree.

Very quaint indeed were some of the actual experiences of housekeeping in those difficult days. Women with ample credit to their names found themselves compelled to ask their milkman to wait till the end of the week for the payment of the few shillings due. The usual cash purchases at the greengrocer's had to be solemnly booked; the fishmonger had to be paid by cheque. Well-to-do folk who had not provided themselves with a little surplus at the end of the previous week had to borrow from the wiser people



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the 4d. or 6d. that would pay an omnibus or underground fare home.

This was the time, and the only time, when a few women lost their heads and resorted to panic purchasing. Every large store could tell of some customers who came down wanting to secure sides of bacon, whole cheeses, tinned meats by the dozen cases, piling up orders indeed that in some instances ran to anything between £200 and £300. They brought their motor-cars, and they kept taxi-cabs in waiting to bear away their supplies. Shop assistants were kept for hours attending to a single individual's wants, and the reserves of many sorts of provisions were sold out.

Equally, too, some of the shops manifested a greed of gain. The very day after war was declared butter ran up from 110s. a cwt. in the wholesale market to 140s., and cheese rose all round 1d. a lb. Other commodities also went up with a bound, contributing to the desire on the part of the short-sighted woman to provide herself while she could. It was a terror of the unknown—always the most difficult sense of fear to overcome—that led them to this wild excess of buying. They did not realize the economic harm they were doing or how unsocial was their attitude. Stern critics rated them for their selfishness, but this was not exactly the cause of their course of action. Rather was it a perverted excess of precaution against possibilities they could only dimly imagine, and the wider aspect of the matter did not strike them at all.

It was but a short and passing phase. The Government very wisely took the nation into its confidence; reminded every one of the might and majesty of the British Navy; gave full assurance as to the sufficiency of the food supplies in the country for all immediate

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needs, and called to its counsel an Advisory Committee of the most competent members of the provision and grocery trades. Acting on their expert advice, it issued on alternate days at first, and later at longer intervals, an official statement as to the maximum prices that should be charged for the commodities of every-day consumption. No sounder step could have been taken. Markets became steady, prices were reasonable, in many things normal indeed, though sugar, on account of the instant stoppage of the beet product from the enemy countries, was nearly double what it had been, and has continued dear throughout the war.

On the other hand was the curious fact that many items were never so cheap. There was an immediate curtailment of anything that suggested luxury, and such things as grapes and peaches were offered at amazingly low prices. There were days when salmon at the Central Market was as cheap as cod, because it could not be sent to the provincial fishmongers and the London demand for it had practically ceased.

In days to come it will no doubt often be asked what was the woman's feeling in regard to invasion. For it was by no means every woman who at the outset of the war had any clear idea of either the overwhelming Naval superiority or the military resources of the country. Vague imaginings filled some minds, no doubt, but these hardly took any definite shape till the siege of Liège had begun, and then there arose a full sense of the horrors that the coming into a country of a powerful army with not only hostile but ruthless intent means to its feminine population.

The Press Censorship was hardly as rigid in those early days of the war as it became later. The Special Correspondents in Belgium could then send home

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lurid but not overdrawn pictures of homes shattered by bursting shells, of terror-stricken women dragging themselves along with infants only a few days old and followed by little children worn out with hunger and fatigue.

Soon came the well-authenticated stories of the systematic firing of peaceful civilian homes in Belgium —of the officially supplied equipment of torches, grenades, rockets, petrol hose, and diabolical little wafers of some compressed substance that would set a cottage or a barn ablaze. There was the horror of sudden unexpected attack; for with the powerlessness of the staunch fortifications of Liège to resist those fearful siege guns of which such wonderful tales were told, what would be the fate of unprotected towns or villages? Presently we heard of the occupation of Luneville, and an atrocious record of the cold-blooded murder of children, young girls, and aged women had startled and horrified us all. Gerbéviller was the scene very early, too, of most cruel crimes in which neither old men nor women were spared. Ladies owning well-furnished houses and nice clothes and jewellery had their valued possessions either wantonly spoiled or else carried away as loot. One lady at Jolivet saw all her beautiful household linen, her handsome furs, and her plate packed into crates to be taken away, after which her house and the rest of its contents were set on fire.

None will forget the sense of pain with which it was learnt that Louvain, with all its fair treasures of art and learning, had been entered by the ruthless enemy on August 19. A few days later this was the terrible state of things that drove home the meaning of war to us. The writer, an eye-witness, says:

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"Leaving Weert St. Georges, I only saw burnt-down villages and half-crazy peasants, who, on meeting any one, held up their hands as a sign of submission. Before every house, even those burnt down, hung a white flag, and the burnt rags of them could be seen among the ruins.

"At Weert St. Georges I questioned the inhabitants on the causes of the German reprisals, and they affirmed most positively that no inhabitant had fired a shot, that in any case the arms had been previously collected, but that the Germans had taken vengeance on the population because a Belgian soldier belonging to the Gendarmerie had killed an Uhlan.

"The population still remaining in Louvain have taken refuge in the suburb of Héverlé, where they are extremely crowded. They have been cleared out of the town by the troops and the fire.

"The fire started a little beyond the American College, and the town is *entirely* destroyed, except for the Town Hall and the station. Furthermore, the fire was still burning to-day, and the Germans, far from taking any steps to stop it, seemed to feed it with straw, an instance of which I observed in the street adjoining the Town Hall. The Cathedral and the theatre are destroyed and have fallen in, as also the library; in short, the town has the appearance of an ancient ruined city, in the midst of which only a few drunken soldiers move about, carrying bottles of wine and liqueurs, while the officers themselves, seated in arm-chairs round the tables, drink like their men.

"In the streets the swollen bodies of dead horses rot in the sun, and the smell of fire and putrefaction pervades the whole place."

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And of the effects on the actual home conditions? A little later a member of the British Friends' Ambulance, who passed through some of these devastated districts, thus vividly records what he saw a few weeks after near Esternay: "When they [the Germans] got to the village they ate and drank everything and burnt nearly all the houses—for spite, it seems; one can think of no other reason. We walked about the ruins a bit, and found in one ruin a Singer sewing-machine all rusted and impossible to use, and in another a burnt-up bed; in one some curtains, and in another an old table; and so on. In each ruin there was perhaps one recognizable thing that reminded one that these places were once the dwellings of homely peasants. It really seems diabolical."

In another case: "A man told us how he left his house and went to the wood and stopped there four days. He then came back, and to his horror (which one can imagine) saw his house in ruins. He went back to his wife and would not tell her for a while. He then had to, and she came back. She had lost all her papers; her son was in the army, and he had written once a week for two years; all these letters were burnt, to her great grief. The son had a nice little farm, and as he was at the war all his tools, machines, etc., were in a barn that was utterly ruined. We are making a shed for her to live in."

How some of the women spent not only these terrible days, but the whole winter through, is revealed in a poignant passage in the report of a member of the American Commission of Relief, who found hardly less distress in Northern France, behind the German lines, than in Belgium. He records:

"About a mile south of the little village of Monthois,

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on a plateau of the Aisne, where the heavy guns of the Germans—set behind a ring of hills in the Ardennes—are booming day and night, we passed a solitary peasant woman working in the field. We all noticed her immediately, because we had come miles without seeing any one but soldiers.

"She told me the way to Vouziers, but did not seem anxious for further conversation. When I explained that I was an American, and that I had come to bring flour to the civilians in that part of the country, she said: 'There is no food here, and the people need it very badly. All the others who lived near here went back to Vouziers, where they thought they could get food more easily, but I have lived here for sixty years, so I stayed on. If I left now in times like these I should never see the place again.

"'I had some chickens hidden there in the wood, and some herbs that grow there, for soup, so I have managed to live. From time to time German soldiers passing from the trenches stop to ask for water, and sometimes they give me some bread in return. When they first came, about five months ago, and fought with our troops, my husband was killed, and I buried him in the wood there after they had passed, so you see I cannot leave him now.'"

An early arrival before the War Relief Committee told how he was a manufacturer from Louvain who had shared in all the horrors attending the destruction of that town. His town house and his country house, with all that they contained, had been destroyed. He himself had been taken as a hostage by the Germans. He was three times blindfolded and ordered to be shot, and three times at the last moment the order was countermanded. He was beaten and spat upon.

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He was forced to march with other Belgians as a covering rank in front of the German advance. As he said, in very quietly relating these experiences: "It is doubted whether the Germans really used Belgian civilians as a covering-shield for their soldiers. I *know*, because they have used me. They put us in the front of their attack and bullets whistled between us as we advanced." But these things were all as nothing to the anguish of knowing that the soldiery which had marched him away in one direction had taken his wife away in another. It was impossible for him to know anything of her fate.

After some days of marching in front of the German troops they came in touch with Belgian outposts. He was able to effect his escape, and he reached Antwerp through the Belgian lines. Still unable to obtain any news of his wife, he advertised in the hope that the news he gave of himself might reach her eyes. It did. After long delay the news was brought to him that she was alive, that she had escaped without serious injury from the Germans, and that she was in hiding in the neighbourhood of Louvain. To reach her he went on foot from Antwerp to Louvain, passing as he could through the German lines, hiding at times in ditches and swamps, wading through rivers to avoid the guarded roads. He told the whole story with absolute calm, and only when he came to the climax of their meeting he suddenly broke down. "My wife," he said; "she had been living in the woods and fields with practically nothing to eat. She was a black skeleton, mere skin drawn over her bones." He could say no more.

Such things are only a few of the fearful surroundings in which the women of a besieged country live.

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There is no need here, however, to pile up the hideous chronicle. The correspondents indicated quite enough to enable the more thoughtful to realize something of the utter desolation that even a few days of war can bring into a country.

Outwardly there seemed at home an almost unnatural calm and absence of any military preparations. Many extraordinary stories got afloat as to the hasty despatch of troops, and German agents in this country spread reports as to whole Highland regiments cut up and massacred. Netley, it was reported to the relatives of officers and men in these days, was full to overflowing with appallingly wounded men landed at midnight and secretly conveyed to its wards. But the good sense of the women of the country asserted itself; such letters were sent to the military authorities and at once disproved.

To the few who were privileged to see it, the march-out of one of the very first battalions of the Guards to leave—that of the 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards—will always remain an unforgettable memory. For then perhaps, more than at any moment in these early days of the war, one realized what was the courage and the spirit that the women might be expected to show. It may be permissible, therefore, to quote the impression recorded at the time in the *Daily Telegraph*, and of some interest inasmuch as it was the first article dealing with the departure of troops from London that the Censor permitted to appear:

"It was not a large group that gathered outside the gates of Chelsea Barracks at 7.30 yesterday morning. A few lads and men risked being late for their day's work to watch the picketed horses and to wonder what was contained in the skilfully-disposed packs already



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on the backs of some. But there were more women in the throng. One was quite elderly, with grey hair showing under her simple black bonnet, and she was met and tenderly escorted under the great archway by a tall and bronzed non-commissioned officer. Scarce a word was exchanged between them, but she leaned heavily upon his arm, and it was hard to say whose heart was the fuller in these last moments.

"The girls were more numerous. Probably not a few were employed in shops or as waitresses, and they were quietly dressed in dark coats and skirts, with hats inconspicuous and plain even to severity. Sisters there were in some instances of the men within, or in others the sweethearts, as the engagement ring proudly displayed was the sufficient sign. Conversation was subdued, but when you caught a sentence it bespoke confidence and hope. And, of course, there were wives —wives with a sense of importance and recognition that has come to them since the Prime Minister's welcome announcement that they would receive allowances, even as those more favoured ones 'on the strength.'

"For it had become quietly known late on Tuesday night that the soldiers would move out of barracks for active service yesterday morning. Even earlier than themselves another regiment had gone away, and later in the day others would do so. Hence the gathering of the little throng in the sunshine of a perfect August morning. Plainly some had had a sleepless night, even though theirs were the 'Tears of hope, pride and pity, trust and prayer.'

"On the broad gravelled expanse of the square itself arms were piled, and the war kit lay on the ground. The baggage-wagons bore their little red

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flags, and there was much coming and going; but all was in perfect order, without the slightest sign of confusion or fuss. The scarlet and gold of the uniform of the band stood out as a brilliant note of colour against the sombre workmanlike khaki. Those women who had any right or excuse to be present were ranged up near the arch, and then perhaps it was that the first tense significance of all became clear.

"With them were the children and the babies. Many a mother, still weak after the great pains and perils she had endured to bring forth the new little life, was there with her babe, proudly determined that the earliest association of which it should be reminded in after years would be how its father went out to this great war. Small boys had little flags fastened to their tunics, the girls had knots of ribbon of our own and our allies' colours on their pinafores. Just a few last words were exchanged, and none would intrude upon their sacredness, while grave heads bent down to take a parting look at the starry blue eyes that the babies so wonderingly opened.

"Then a bugle call rang out. The band were standing in a circle, and started a lively air. Already the baggage party and the wagons had gone. Swiftly every man was in his place, and had everything about him in marching order. The women drew more closely together by the arch. For one, at least, it is too much. She whispers something to a companion, who bows her head silently, and takes by the hand the little brown-jerseyed boy at her side, moving him so that he may see well when the men march out. The poor mother herself slips away, and those around make way for her to the solitude which in that supreme moment seems even more to be desired than sympathy itself.

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"Another lifts up the chubby little two-year-old boy, who has a flag to wave. A couple of girls have clasped hands, and a mother stands biting her lips in these last moments. The band is now in marching order, an officer or two have ridden up and down the ranks, and there is strained attention throughout the quiet and dry-eyed group. To those waiting the time seemed long, yet it was but a minute or so.

"It is to the regimental march that the men move out. The band plays it as steadily as if merely going out for the ceremony of changing guard. Anything less sentimental, less emotional, could not be imagined, and the restrained calm of these last moments is characteristic of the superb self-control of recent days. The steady tramp—that tread of many footsteps that can be so impressive—has begun, and the men going away later and those outside begin to cheer. Just once in a way a woman would thrust her hand out for a final pressure of a man's fingers; now and again some word of encouragement, as 'We shall think of you all the time,' or 'Write as soon as you can,' was heard, but this was not often. It was a scene of which every Englishwoman could be proud. These wives, mothers, sisters, were sending away in absolute calmness those dearest on earth to them, and they did so with the finest courage—that courage which knows what it can endure—thus giving to the men a parting memory that will be their most precious recollection in the anxious and arduous days before them."

As events turned out, no battalion of the whole Army suffered more heavy loss, in deaths, disablement, wounds, and as prisoners of war. But those women represented the spirit of all their sisters, and they gave their dearest with pride, even though at their hearts

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was something that none dared formulate into a thought.

Mr. Asquith showed an unerring judgment as to the nation's wishes when he announced that the former hard and often unjust distinction between wives "on" and "off" the regimental strength should cease at least for the duration of this war. It lifted a tremendous load off many a brave man's heart to think that the wife whom he had married in youth, and perhaps without much thought then for the future, but who had proved herself a brave soul, caring for the children, eking out his own poor pay by taking odd jobs of work when she could get them, was sure of the separation allowance on the full scale, would have a grant for each child, and if the worst came was sure of a widow's pension.

In the first few days some of the women experienced a little difficulty as to how they were to apply for their grants and allowances. The men had gone off in many instances so hastily, or were called up as reservists at such brief notice, that they had not ascertained, or had failed to make the women understand, what would be the proper procedure. Here, too, the well-meaning voluntary worker fell a little short for a week or two. But in some way or another it became known that the claim and the marriage certificate must go to the Record Office of the regiment, and before August was out the machinery was in regular working order and the women were receiving all that the country wished them to have. Even that allowed at the first came subsequently to be regarded as insufficient, and twice was the scale increased, until at the beginning of March an Order in Council prescribed that it should not be less for the wife of a private than 12s. 6d. a week. With one child it would be 17s. 6d., with two 21s., with

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three 23s., and so on with an additional 2s. for each child. A motherless child is allowed 5s. a week, which is paid to a relative or some suitable person to undertake its care.

Women, too, were bearing their share in another phase of work through Dr. Hector Munro's Volunteer Ambulance Corps, which was early at work on the invasion of Belgium. There was perhaps some misunderstanding at the outset over this, due to the snapshots of hasty photographers, and there was some criticism of "nurses in Yeomanry kit." As a fact, Dr. Munro had no place for nurses as nurses in his scheme; but he had profound belief in the common sense of the woman who has ridden to hounds, taken her part in the everyday life of the countryside, able to drive her own motor and do its running repairs, knowing more than one language, and able generally to hold her own.

The party that went out with him included Lady Dorothy Feilding, Mrs. Wynne, Miss Chisholm, Miss M'Naghten, the well-known writer of humorous Scottish stories, who managed a soup and coffee kitchen close to the Belgian lines, and some two or three more, as well as some gentlemen and some professional chauffeurs. Mrs. Wynne took her own motor car—a 50 horse-power Mercedes fitted with a four-stretcher ambulance carriage. The unit received the official recognition of the Belgian Government, and was placed under military disposition, and in these first days of the war the cars often were sent to the market-places of the little towns and larger villages that had been shelled during the day. The wounded were brought out from the houses, poor women and children dazed with terror and fear were fetched out of the cellars or the

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hiding-places where they had concealed themselves, while stretcher-bearers sought those fallen within the radius of the fighting. Often the shells were still flying over, but Mrs. Wynne, describing something of what she had done, said that the ambulance cars seemed under special protection.

Then would begin the journey to the hospital at the base, often very inadequately equipped. No lights were permitted on the journey, but this intrepid woman rendered exactly the same service as the men, choosing indeed often the worst cases, as she knew her car so well and could drive it so as to cause the least possible jolting to fractured limbs. Frequently she would remain beside her patients all night; and as she knew French perfectly, many have been the pathetic last messages she sent to stricken wives and mothers. She has stood with men undergoing some terrible operation with insufficient anaesthetic, and has cheered and helped their last hours with her brave, womanly presence. About it all she said very simply, "There are times when, if you cannot help a man to live, you can at least help him to die."

Since then the King of the Belgians has conferred the Order of Leopold upon Lady Dorothy Feilding, whose bravery in bringing in the wounded, often under fire, has won the respect and admiration of all who have worked with her.

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## CHAPTER III

### THE APPEALS OF THE QUEEN

**An enlarged Needlework Guild—The request for socks and belts —The Work for Women Fund and the Central Committee on Women's Employment.**

To the Queen it is that women owe the passing of that sense of utter impotence which possessed them in the first days of the war. Every one was asking herself what she could do that would be of some value in the general needs, and during that first memorable week no satisfying answer had come. None of the Leagues or Guilds or Committees that had seemed so important before were of the smallest moment before the great issues that loomed ahead.

Of course the first thing to be considered was the problem of general relief. Every one foretold the stoppage of various industries, a restricted labour market, and distress on all hands. The Prince of Wales' Fund was the first great organization to be formed, and it secured at once an unprecedented meed of support, the first million sterling being subscribed by August 14. Looking back now after a winter when many industries have been working at a pressure they have never known before, when the difficulty has been to get workers rather than to provide work, when the



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statistics of Poor Law relief showed less dire poverty than for many years past, it is a little strange to think how all the forecasts were miscalculated. But this generation had never come face to face with such a war, and could only vaguely imagine terrible things.

Then the Queen put forward her first project. For many years past Her Majesty has taken the deepest and most practical interest in the Needlework Guild. It is an interest indeed that dates from her girlhood, for the original scheme was formulated by the first Lady Wolverton, a valued and trusted friend of Princess Mary, Duchess of Teck, whose own support and that of her fair young daughter were enlisted in it almost from its inception. Every year, alike as Duchess of York, as Princess of Wales, and as Queen, Her Majesty has supervised the sorting, classifying, and allocation of the ever-growing volume, reaching in 1914 to over 70,000 garments, among the hospitals, charitable institutions, poor parishes, and missions of London.

Here, then, the machinery for a great collection was at hand. All existing regulations as to a promise to contribute two garments a year, or the small money contribution of certain classes of members, were swept aside, and " Queen Mary's Needlework Guild " became the vast clearing-house for all useful clothing that could be provided.

It was in these words that the Queen addressed herself to the women of the country :

" I appeal to all the presidents of the Needlework Guilds throughout the British Isles to organize a large collection of garments for those who will suffer on account of the war, and I appeal to all women who are in a position to do so to aid the Guilds with their work.

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"Garments will be of service to the soldiers, sailors, and territorials, to their families, to the military and naval hospitals, and to those among the poorer classes of the population who will suffer from any distress that may arise.

"I hope that the Guilds will co-operate with the Prince of Wales' National Relief Fund, with the Red Cross Society (who have the organising of working parties among their schemes), the Territorial Associations, Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Associations, and the Soldiers' and Sailors' Help Society.

"The most useful garments for soldiers and sailors on active service are: Flannel shirts, socks, sweaters, and cardigan jackets. For the naval and military hospitals: Night-shirts, pyjamas, flannel bed-jackets, and bed socks, which would be distributed by the British Red Cross Society.

"Large numbers of all the ordinary garments for women and children will be required. Those intended for the wives and children of soldiers, sailors, and territorials will be distributed with the help of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association and of the Territorial Associations, through whom every possible assistance will be rendered to the families of those called up to serve in the Reserve and Territorial Battalions.

"Those garments intended for persons suffering from distress owing to unemployment should be sent to the Committees for the Prevention and Relief of Distress which are being formed by the mayors and provosts, and the chairmen of the County Councils and larger Urban District Councils. These committees will give all forms of assistance to persons who stand in need of it, and it is important that they should have

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information of all the help, of whatever kind, given in their districts.

"I have arranged that all work by my Guilds in London shall be received at Friary Court, St. James's Palace, and distributed from there to the various associations."

The response was amazing. No one had imagined in the days of peace and calm, when so large a proportion of women seemed to be more interested in books and music and art, in causes, athletics, and amusements, how widespread was the knowledge of needlecraft, so readily did the majority show themselves expert at it. The girl who had neglected this feminine craft at school found herself humiliated and somewhat despised if she had no accomplishments in this direction. Promptly, however, she set herself to make good her deficiencies, and never had grandmammas and great-aunts more docile pupils than some of the most exuberant of hockey players proved to be when it came to learning how to knit a sock or put a wristband to a shirt.

At first, as was natural, there was a degree of amateurishness, especially over the made-up garments. Shirts wrong as to proportions, children's frocks of impossibly heavy materials, and a proportion of what was useless and futile came in. But the common sense of the Englishwoman that has been so conspicuous throughout these days of stress soon asserted itself. Poor needlewomen were out of work, surely it were better to pay them to make such things. Thus, the great shops were enabled to recall some of their workroom staffs, as the richer women began to see it was better to buy many things made by practised hands. Then working parties were organized, at

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which perhaps one skilled helper would be paid to come and cut the work out, showing the others how it should be made up. Even the poorest wanted a share in the effort. A bed-ridden crippled girl in South London, whose only accomplishment was that of knitting exquisitely fine bootikins for infants, by which she earned a few pence weekly that brought her the slender comforts she knew, put her money aside to buy some wool, saying she could not do much for a soldier but she could make what would keep his baby's feet warm. Two such pairs went to add to the Queen's collection.

Servants willingly renounced their afternoons and evenings out to work for the Guild; children gave up the money they had saved for holiday pleasures to buy wool; and even men and boys besought their women folk to show them how to knit. Some indeed became quite expert over plain mufflers, while others found they could manipulate the wool better on a frame with pegs, lifting loop over loop in a series of circles. All the world in fact set to work to do something, and the woman who a few months before had not felt herself of much social importance, found she had become a welcome guest and a successful star because she knew some clever method of turning the heel of a sock or putting the thumb to a mitten.

The second appeal launched by the Queen was on September 22, and was for belts and socks for the men at the front. It was about that time that the greatest difficulties that have arisen as regards all Army clothing were most acutely felt. Existing stocks were depleted in the great distributing warehouses; the manufacturers had not yet adapted themselves to the changed conditions.

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Lord Kitchener foresaw requirements of at least 300,000 belts and 300,000 pairs of socks by November 1. To have called for contracts would have brought in offers of hastily prepared things. Moreover, the conditions of ordinary retail trade could not be ignored as the shops needed their own supplies. It was a stroke of genius on his part to consult Her Majesty on the matter, but those who have ever come into touch with the Queen and her methods know the sound practical common sense that she brings to bear on all subjects.

There was another consideration. The Secretary of State for War, understanding the mind of the soldier, fully realized that such additions to the ordinary equipment would be valued more if it could in any way be regarded as a personal gift from a woman. A very eloquent passage in Kinglake's *History of the Crimea* records the extraordinary delight that the men manifested then as they received the daintily enwrapped parcels that ladies, then as now, sent to them, and the same gratitude would be felt again.

Hence the Queen called once more upon "the Women of the Empire," this time to supply this huge demand. The Duke and Duchess of Devonshire lent Devonshire House for the reception and the sorting of the gifts. Lady Isobel Gathorne Hardy and Lady Bland-Sutton took a leading part in making all necessary arrangements, and Lord Farquhar acted as treasurer. In this case money was acceptable as poor women who had lost other employment could be paid to do the work, and £1000 was early sent to Scotland to be earned by the fisher girls whose work had ceased, and a like sum to Ireland, where several cottage industries do admirable knitting. The women of Dundee in this

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123 hospitals abroad, 93,263 garments.
Indian Fund, 11,097 garments.
Royal Navy, 34,230 garments.
15 camps, 16,895 garments.
Forces in South Africa, 1882 garments.
Forces in East Africa, 3000 garments (from Devonshire House).
Forces in Egypt, 9900 garments (from Devonshire House).
Allied forces, 11,154 garments (from Devonshire House).
61 convalescent homes, 8974 garments (from Devonshire house).
Belgian refugees, 8714 garments (from Devonshire House).
Officers' families fund, 2290 garments (from Devonshire House).
145 Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association committees, 62,053 garments (from Devonshire House).
Committees of relief for helping women and children, 76,306 garments (from Devonshire House).
Various, 5104 garments (from Devonshire House).

In making the various distributions the three primary considerations were:

1. That a real want exists.
2. That the clothing reached its proper destination.
3. That there should be no overlapping.

All these conditions were most faithfully observed, and outside the Royal household none will ever know fully the real personal interest that the Queen took in the matter. Quantities of really beautiful garments were sent in by no means suited for hard-working wear. These were put aside for the various professional organizations, and struggling women journalists whose work had been woefully diminished through the war were among those whom Her Majesty remembered with specially beautiful personal wear.

Meantime the Queen's Work for Women Fund had

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come into existence. At the same time, the Local Government Board was creating a Central Employment Committee, with a branch specially for women, who, as it seemed in the early days of the war, would suffer badly. The Marchioness of Crewe filled the chair of these two committees, bringing them into accord. Lady Roxburgh was secretary to the Fund, Miss Mary Macarthur was placed in the position of chief responsibility to the latter, while many well-known women served on both.

The association of the Queen with such an effort was of course quite sufficient to commend it, and money was given generously. But it must be conceded that at the outset some mistakes were made by the joint committees. A policy was adopted of stating that widespread distress was existing and that help was urgently needed. Undoubtedly in the cotton industry the position was grave, and the very high-class dressmakers, milliners, and the ministrants to some of what may be defined as the "luxury trades" were hardly hit. But very little in these early days was vouchsafed as to definite or statistical information, and people reading of single firms securing contracts for a million shirts or a million tunics were inclined to ask whether some adjustments between the demand and supply of labour could not be effected.

Still, as matters righted themselves to some extent, and the women's labour market began to adapt itself to changed conditions, the fund fulfilled an exceedingly useful purpose in making it possible not only to open workrooms to meet conditions that it might be hoped were merely temporary, but in so directing, training, and teaching that much more stable conditions as to some feminine industries might be established. An



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enormous amount of detail had to be considered in the appointment of local representative committees, the organization of schemes of work, the securing of suitable premises, the selection of applicants to be helped and how helped, the nature of the work to be done, and the question of maintenance of girls during the time that they were receiving the instruction which would place them in the position of being able to enter vocations where the demand for labour was in excess of the supply.

Relief work at the outset was the most urgent problem. An essential condition of this had to be that it should not set up a subsidized competition with ordinary industry, yet at the same time that it should be of a character that would maintain and improve the efficiency of the unemployed woman. For this reason, the Central Committee had to rule out any schemes by which orders could be taken and paid for, though this it was found practicable to modify later in actual experience, or to produce what could be sold. A *via media* was found in the utilization of the special workrooms to turn out garments that would be suitable for distribution in the distress which it was anticipated would be widespread. Maternity outfits were greatly wanted at the various schools for mothers ; the needs of the destitute Belgian refugees suggested another source of demand ; and it was well understood that many poor homes might be enriched with such little comforts as cushions or quilts beyond the purchasing powers of their owners.

Thus the work began. There were various critics who complained that applicants were not always kindly or tactfully treated by local committees, but it was made a condition that all who wanted employment

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should have exercised all reasonable efforts to obtain it through the Board of Trade Labour Exchanges which exist in all districts of London and in the chief industrial centres. Local committees were formed through the organizations which now exist in every important municipality for the relief of distress. These can use the machinery of the Mayor and Corporation, and the Town Hall Buildings, and are at an advantage thus to secure the general collaboration of other responsible people. A Women's Employment Sub-Committee was generally formed, and through them many ladies found exactly the opportunities for doing the really useful public work which they craved when it became evident that the life-and-death struggle in which we were engaged would call for the united efforts of all.

During the autumn some twelve workrooms were opened in London, and about seventy of these, as well as centres of training, were established up and down the country. With scarcely a single exception they have all been singularly happy in the choice of those who have been responsible for their working. Good order and discipline have been maintained, the very best attributes of the workers have been drawn out, and charming little stories are told of the mutual helpfulness developed, as when one woman fell ill and her fellow-workers raised among themselves no less than 17s. to help her to tide over the weeks of inactivity.

The Queen herself was a frequent visitor to the various centres, and not a few of those who had come to them as a kind of stop-gap were amazed at the pleasant womanly sympathy that was shown them by all, from Her Majesty downwards. At one of the work-

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rooms a sufficient indication of the Queen's intention to inspect it in the course of the afternoon had been given for the Mayor and Mayoress of the Borough and the local committee to assemble, and to provide a beautiful bouquet of carnations, which was graciously accepted. But later on a bent, feeble, little woman came forward and diffidently offered a few daffodils, asking if she might give them on behalf of those Her Majesty had helped. "Thank you very much," said the Queen, "and now let me shake your hand." Another one informed the Queen that many of the handsomest parasols used at the fêtes and garden parties in honour of her wedding had been finished by this poor worker, and also enjoyed the few words of kindly recognition that none know better how to bestow than herself.

Then there has been also an excellent arrangement at all the workrooms for providing meals. Generally the women took it in rotation to cook the plain dinner, of food-stuffs vastly superior to those they could buy in the cheap shops by pennyworths. The kitchens always had especial attention from the Queen on these visits, and Her Majesty would often stop to watch the preparations for tea, with some simple little luxuries of cakes.

Not the least useful work undertaken by the committee was that of adjusting a better distribution of labour, and in this direction it was able to bear an important part in the paid industrial work of the country. Both France and Russia quite early in the war began to look to us to help them in regard to their equipment of boots and clothes. Leicester, Kettering, Northampton, and those other great centres of shoemaking began to work at the highest pressure of over-

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time and extra shifts, though here only indirectly were women concerned. But when it came to the production of, say, a million flannel shirts, it was obvious that if only worker and employer could be placed in touch it would be to the benefit of both.

Many of the chief dressmaking firms were only too anxious to retain the services of valuable and experienced hands, but were at their wits' end how to do so, when ladies were ordering perhaps one autumn gown in place of the three or four previously required. The Central Committee got into touch with such houses, and found that fully 150 of them would gladly collaborate, lending their workrooms, if the fund would pay the women. Thus, something like 1000 women have had employment that helped them to tide over the difficult period of the winter without in any way preventing them from resuming their normal occupations as soon as their services were required.

In the spring the Government knew that 2,000,000 pairs of socks would be wanted, and that they could be made on automatic knitting machines. Here again the Committee could step in and advise, especially as the project may be developed into a small contract department mainly for experimental purposes, for the Committee itself had had valuable experience in this direction. It has started eight such workrooms in London, and one at Cradley Heath, where the women lost much of the labour that had fallen to them before the war. It is the lighter, cheaper forms of chain that they make, and the demand for this fell off considerably with the dislocation of so many industries.

An indirect educational work of great future value has been done through the centre in Park Street, Park Lane, which specialized chiefly upon children's clothes

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made upon the simple lines that Miss Synge, Mme. Montessori, and kindergarten experts have long advocated. The Duchess of Albany some years ago through the Deptford Fund made an effort to popularize simpler forms, though the time then was hardly ripe. But as the garments turned out from here were sent as fast as they could be finished to relief committees, branches of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association and other distributing organizations, as well as the Schools for Mothers and Baby Clinics now springing up in all directions, they are coming into the hands it is most desirable for them to reach. Already there are signs that they are being fully appreciated, and poor mothers are expressing their gratitude for patterns so easily washed and ironed.

The Government of Australia offered free passages to domestic servants thrown out of employment by the war, and a hundred complete outfits on these lines, but adapted to grown-up needs, were made in the Queen's workrooms. Thus, the influences will be carried far, and the whole effort may well lead to the adoption of more hygienic clothing for children and young people. This in itself would be no unworthy by-result of the effort, apart from the help afforded to hundreds of women when their needs were very sore, or the good work that was done in finding permanent employment for them once more, as industry began to assume its more normal conditions.

It may be recorded, too, that the whole work of administration of these great enterprises has been in the hands of women, for with the exception of Lord Farquhar, who acted as treasurer to the Belts and Socks Fund, ladies have filled all the offices. In the case of the jointly organized Work for Women Fund

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and the Central Committee on Women's Employment, very large sums of money have been involved, as something like £140,000 has already been given, and there has been an immense amount of detailed labour as to its allocation, the outlay on salaries and the purchase of materials, as well, of course, as the payment of workers. All, however, has been carried through in a good business-like fashion that has shown the latent capacity of the educated Englishwoman for organization upon a large scale.

One more appeal was made. It came from the War Office after the first diabolical use by the enemy of poisonous gas fumes, north of Ypres in April. A simple form of respirator was called for according to two specified patterns, and it was simply said that about half a million would be wanted. Within two days the women of England voluntarily supplied more than that number. The prompt response to a real need was a noble proof of practical thought and aid.

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# CHAPTER IV

## SOME ROYAL EFFORTS

**Princess Mary's Christmas gift—Queen Alexandra's many kind acts —The quiet help of the Princesses—An Indian Princess as War Journalist.**

Now that we see things in all due perspective, we realize that among the many happy inspirations of Queen Victoria, she never had one that gave a more direct association between herself and the rank and file of the Army than the bestowal of a box of chocolate on every man serving in South Africa in 1899–1900. It had a recognition of the personal equation that did not exist even in the medal of the campaign. Up and down the country the boxes—with their effective medallion portrait, their cheery red and blue lettering, the " I wish you a happy New Year, V. R. I.," in facsimile of her handwriting—are still to be found, kept as dearly cherished mementoes. Not a few of them still contain the dust of the now disintegrated chocolate, regarded by all as something too valuable merely to be eaten.

Probably it was the recollection of the real pleasure that these gifts bestowed that led to the inception of Princess Mary's gift to all the troops of all ranks and the whole personnel of the Royal Navy on Christmas



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Day. Her Royal Highness, before placing herself at the head of this movement, had not been associated with any big public effort. Both the King and the Queen had regarded her studies as calling for all the attention she could devote to them, and, as with the Prince of Wales, had not permitted that distractions in outside enterprises, however good, should interfere with these. But Princess Mary had seen a good deal of what the soldier's life is, and at Aldershot had on several occasions ridden with the King on all His Majesty's long and careful day's inspection. Let it be said, too, that her good riding and her endurance of fatigue had won admiration on all hands.

It was therefore a very pleasant and gracious idea that she should organize a scheme to remember every man, including those lonely fellows who have literally no one to think of them at such festal times. Every one serving the King, afloat or at the front, would then have a memento, and moreover one that he could keep and point to with a lasting pride. Princess Mary launched her appeal through the daily Press on October 14, 1914, and for simple directness it could not have been better :

"For many weeks we have all been greatly concerned for the welfare of the sailors and soldiers who are so gallantly fighting our battles by sea and land. Our first consideration has been to meet their more pressing needs, and I have delayed making known a wish that has long been in my heart for fear of encroaching on other Funds, the claims of which have been more urgent.

"I want you all now to help me to send a Christmas present from the whole nation to every sailor afloat and every soldier at the front. On Christmas Eve, when,

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like the shepherds of old, they keep their watch, doubtless their thoughts will turn to home and to the loved ones left behind, and perhaps, too, they will recall the days when, as children themselves, they were wont to hang out their stockings, wondering what the morrow had in store.

"I am sure that we should all be the happier to feel that we had helped to send our little token of love and sympathy on Christmas morning, something that would be useful and of permanent value, and the making of which may be the means of providing employment in trades adversely affected by the war. Could there be anything more likely to hearten them in their struggle than a present received straight from home on Christmas Day?

"Please, will you help me?

"MARY."

The Princess's own contribution was £25, while the King gave his daughter £100, the Queen £50, the Prince of Wales £50. Other contributors whose names appeared below the appeal were Lord and Lady Rothermere with £1000, and Sir William Lever with £500.

A few days later, Princess Mary called to her help an influential committee, which had the Duke of Devonshire as chairman, while Earl Roberts was a member—the last committee that he joined before his death. Others on it were Countess Bathurst, Lady Katherine Coke, Lady Balfour of Burleigh, the Hon. Mrs. Harry Lawson, Lady French, Lady Northcliffe, and Lady Rothermere, together with the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord Rosebery, and representatives of the Labour Party in the House of Commons. It was estimated that quite £100,000 would be needed to give every man something lasting and useful, and it soon

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*Photo*] [*Sport & General.*

**LADY FRENCH AND HER COMMITTEE OF WORKERS.**

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became apparent that the full sum—and more—would be forthcoming.

The form of gift selected was a brass tobacco-box of stout and durable make. In the centre of the lid is a small medallion of the Princess, and there is a suggestion of the Empire period in the graceful bordering. Above the portrait are the words *Imperium Britannicum*, and below it is inscribed "Christmas, 1914." Enclosed in small circles are the names of the Allies—Belgium, France, Servia on the left, Japan, Russia, and Montenegro on the right. A packet of cigarettes and a packet of tobacco were enclosed, together with a dainty Christmas card, having outside the Princess's crown and cypher, and within a sprig of embossed holly, and the words on one leaf, "With best wishes for a happy Christmas and a victorious New Year," and on that opposite, "From the Princess Mary and Friends at Home." Accompanying the box was a silver-mounted briar pipe.

No small labour was involved in the thousands of boxes for transit. Even yet the exact figures as to numbers cannot be given; for it would obviously have been valuable information to the enemy to have said how many were going to the officers and men afloat and at the front, while a number are yet set aside for the prisoners of war who could not receive their gift on Christmas Day. The work of packing, which engaged many feminine hands, was carried on in the Islington Cattle Market, and the now-disused yards at Deptford at which American and Canadian beasts were formerly landed. Both the Queen and Princess Mary paid visits to these yards, and themselves packed two boxes, enclosing a request that the recipient might send a special acknowledgment to Buckingham Palace.

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Both fell into the hands of privates, who sent their thanks in due course.

Very great precautions were taken to ensure the cases reaching the ships and the front in safety. As to how they came to France "Eye-Witness" shall tell the tale:—

"In quarters, in the trenches, and in the hospitals these tokens of the kindly thought of Their Majesties gave the most intense pleasure. In fact, the eagerness shown by some of the wounded to receive their presents was almost pathetic, and many soldiers have written personal letters of thanks to Their Majesties. The Indian troops exhibited their boxes with an undisguised pride and glee, which showed how these prizes would be treasured and handed down as heirlooms.

"As can be imagined, the distribution of this number of parcels in addition to the immense amount of warm clothing and other gifts for the troops was no easy task. But the organization of the transport, the supply, and the railway services was sufficient to cope with the problem. All the Christmas traffic was handled by means of a special staff, with officers stationed at the bases and railheads. Elaborate precautions were taken to prevent any loss *en route* of the presents of the Princess Mary's Fund. They were conveyed in closed vans locked by letter-locks, of which the key-word was known only to certain officers. Some of the vans were also tied up with barbed wire. This great precaution nearly led to disaster in one case. The receiving officer had either forgotten or not received the opening word, 'Noel,' and could not get the van open until he hauled at the fastening with a motor lorry."

But this was not all of the direct royal remembrance

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that went to the men. Very quietly—so quietly that no one in London knew within forty-eight hours of their despatch—the King and Queen had placed the largest individual order for Christmas cards that the trade had ever received. The card bore the portrait of the Queen—one best liked in the Royal circle and showing Her Majesty with a great diamond crown having the *croix patée* and *fleur de lis* alternating and a blaze of other jewels above her Court dress; while that for the naval men had the King's portrait as an Admiral of the Fleet. For the army the King gave a special sitting in khaki field kit. To all on active service went out the message: "*With our best wishes for Christmas* 1914, MARY R., GEORGE R.I. *May God preserve you and bring you home safe.*" A second version of the card was prepared for those wounded and in hospital, and on these the latter part of the message ran: "*May you have a speedy recovery.*" The card made Christmas happy to fully fifty girls. Here again was a big task of sorting and putting into the envelopes bearing the Royal Arms in crimson. Messrs. Downey, entrusted with their preparation, applied to the Walham Green Labour Exchange, Women's Branch, for clerks and typists who were out of work. An empty house was lent for the packing, and for some weeks this number of happy and admirably conducted young women were earning enough to keep themselves in fair comfort and to look forward to some quiet pleasure at Christmas.

Queen Alexandra did not associate herself with one particular appeal, but in a score of directions has helped, encouraged, supported, various good works. She it was who signed the first appeal through the public press for the British Red Cross Society; she it was

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who reminded the nation first of the valuable agency it possessed in the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association. Both the Church Army and the Salvation Army formulated their own measures of relief, and Her Majesty was ready at any time to inspect their units and to say exactly the words of kindness and God-speed that would be remembered in the days of strain and fatigue. With the many calls upon the time of the King and Queen it was impossible for Their Majesties to attend the concerts or the other entertainments for various war funds organized so generously by singers and artistes. But Queen Alexandra, with truly gracious understanding of how much time and talent had been given to the arrangement of such undertakings, would often spontaneously announce her intention of being present, giving in that way a real distinction to the occasion. She wished no formalities, no receptions by a committee. All she desired was to go to her seat, and perhaps in the course of the performance to send for the lady who had been chiefly responsible, and more than reward her for all her efforts by a few kind sentences of appreciation.

"Miss Sidney Browne is visiting all the hospitals, and was here yesterday. She presented the fur cape from Queen Alexandra to one of the Regular Sisters who has lately joined us."

Such is an extract from the letter of an Army Reserve Nurse from the hospital at Versailles, and it might well puzzle the historian of the future. But Queen Alexandra bethought herself of the cold and discomfort in which many of the nurses of her own Imperial Service had to travel, and ordered a fur-lined cloak, muff, and hood for each of them. The gifts

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were enclosed in a specially designed bag with her own cypher on it, and sent at the same time was a card of good wishes for Christmas and a charmingly dainty perfume sachet. Miss Becher, Matron-in-Chief, was commanded to come to Marlborough House to inspect the useful and valuable gifts, which were conveyed to the nurses by herself and Miss Browne, Matron-in-Chief of the Territorial Nurses, to the delighted and surprised recipients.

The well-known and practical interest taken by the Princess Christian in all that pertains to nursing led to frequent consultation with her on this aspect of the work, especially as regards the staffing of semi-private hospitals. It may be recalled that in the South African War the Princess, in collaboration with railway and medical experts, planned the most perfect hospital train seen up to that time. This train has been the model that helped the various companies to place upon their lines the admirably equipped trains which have met the wounded at Southampton to convey them to their own districts, while another, modelled exactly upon it, was provided by the Princess to go to France, where it was much needed. "A perfect hospital on wheels" was the description that those who saw it before leaving applied to it. But the part that Her Royal Highness has taken has been one of quiet assistance, and she has not placed herself at the head of any great movement.

Equally, it is a modest but withal useful record of help simply given where most wanted that the Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, would claim for herself. Her little hospital at Roseneath in Scotland has been ever open to invalids from the front; she has contributed paintings and sculpture done by herself to a

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great sale organized on behalf of Red Cross work; and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, of which famous regiment she holds the rank of Honorary Colonel-in-Chief, has owed to her an inexhaustible supply of the comforts in additional warm garments, tobacco, chocolate, and other welcome things that helped them materially through the winter's trials.

No one has offered a more precious gift in this than Princess Beatrice, whose dearly loved son, Prince Maurice, laid down his life in France in the early autumn. Naturally, the Princess has spent much of her time since this sad loss in retirement, but many a kindly visit to others bereaved like herself, and the ready help to gentlewomen who have suffered through the war that the Working Ladies' Guild has been able to render, has owed much to her constant support in these difficult days.

Not only has the Princess Victoria been associated much with Queen Alexandra in her untiring labours, but Her Royal Highness, with some money presented by a few friends, was able to give employment in shirt-making to several girls at the outset of the war. At Christmas, too, there were charming little stories current as to the Princess's gifts of toys to hospitals and even individual little folks, for Her Royal Highness's love for children is well known, and none understands better how to delight them with the unexpected surprise.

To the Duchess of Albany we owe some of the best advice that was given at the outset of the war. It fell to her to take an active part in Red Cross organization in Surrey, and meeting the workers at a very early stage, she gave them practical counsel as to the forms of needlecraft that would be most wanted, urging the

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need for good materials and good stitching. To this, moreover, she added some admirable advice on the avoidance of fussiness and fluster. Part of Claremont, her beautiful home, was given up by her to be used as a Red Cross hospital.

In this connection there stands out too in the commanding dignity and venerable years the noble figure of the Empress Eugenie. To her this war must be an ever poignant reminder of the events of 1870–71, wherein she also knew what German barbarism meant, and, like the oppressed people of Belgium, had to seek the shelter and hospitality of Great Britain, to whose service she gave her only son. One of the very first places to offer rest and care, the best of medical attendance, the most skilled nursing to wounded officers was her beautiful home at Farnborough, while she herself would move about among the patients, alike indoors and in the grounds when the weather permitted them to be in the open air. Everything that could be done for her guests, amid the delightful surroundings of this quiet home, was considered, and helped towards many complete recoveries.

The Young Men's Christian Association secured a most energetic worker when they enlisted the sympathies of Princess Victoria, daughter of the Princess Christian. One of the first ways in which Her Highness manifested her interest was by taking the central part in the ceremony at which the splendid premises in Tottenham Court Road were placed at the free disposal of every man wearing the King's uniform. To thousands it has filled the place of a club, with all its reading- and writing-rooms, its gymnasium and restaurant; and it has proved a valuable meeting-place when men have been passing through the metropolis. The next



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phase of its efforts that she has actively promoted has been the provision of motor coffee stalls to be moved according to the exigencies of the troops, whether in the trenches, in taking new positions, or on the routes when long marches had to be undertaken. The hot tea, coffee, and soup has been immensely appreciated, and has been a most useful adjunct to the yet wider work that the Association is doing in France.

One of the developments least foreseen at the outset of the war was the extraordinary interest it has awakened among Indian ladies of high rank. With the Begum of Bhopal this was perhaps no matter for surprise. She has long enjoyed the personal friendship of the King and Queen; she is a Knight Commander of the Star of India, and she possesses that coveted and exclusive decoration for women of the Crown of India. Her Imperial Service Cavalry and Infantry are as fine and soldierly a contingent as that of any of the native States. These she at once placed at the service of the Government of India, following this up by accepting a very large share of the cost of equipping the hospital ship "Loyalty" for the native troops. Then came a gift of motor cars, and a big and useful consignment of vaseline for the men marching and for the hospitals. Still, knowing her broad and statesmanlike outlook, which places her among the wisest administrators of to-day in India, you do not feel greatly amazed at her truly Imperial help.

Then, again, Bhaunagar, one of the most enlightened of the Western States, placed its whole resources at the service of the Empire. The Maharani Nankoverba of this State also belongs to the Order of the Crown of India, and she has shown her personal loyalty in a commendably original form. She has entered the

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ranks of working journalism, and sends out every week an excellently printed weekly paper in Gujerati for the dissemination of correct news as to the progress of the war. In a "foreword" in her first number she wrote: "It is felt that only a few educated men are fully aware of the real motives of this devastating war in Europe, and therefore it is important that the truth about it should be spread generally among the people of India, and so impress upon them the duties and responsibilities they should undertake, and more especially so upon the Rajput and warrior sections of the population."

The journal bears the royal arms of Great Britain on its outer sheet. Sometimes it is illustrated with portraits of one or another whose name or brave deed has been to the fore. It is distributed gratuitously by thousands, not only in her husband's State, but up and down the whole east Gujerati-speaking population of the Bombay Presidency. As this is the first known instance of an Indian princess concerning herself with the production of a typical newspaper the Society of Women Journalists unanimously invited her to become a vice-president, knowing also that in her they would add a most accomplished and progressive member to their number.

In several other instances the Maharanis have associated themselves with their husbands in placing even their private jewels at the disposal of the Government. In all the Presidency cities, and indeed in the lesser towns, Indian women have worked for the Red Cross, supplying especially the extra garments and the hospital requirements for the native army going to the front.

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# CHAPTER V

## HOW THE NURSES MOBILIZED

**Calling up the Naval Reserve—Women on the Hospital Ships—Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service—The Departure for France—Work at Versailles, Brussels, and Antwerp.**

In no direction had both the Admiralty and the War Office exercised greater foresight than in regard to a due and adequate provision of nurses to meet the needs that would arise directly our Grand Fleet cleared for action and our Army went into the field. To trace the growth of the systems which have developed now into Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service and Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service is perhaps hardly necessary here. For all practical purposes bearing on the present war the South African campaign marked the parting of the ways and the supersession of old and insufficing methods by new organizations adapted to new needs.

Even before South Africa, the Princess Christian, whose lifelong interest in the nursing profession gave special weight to her warnings, realized that the Army system would not be equal to any exceptional strain upon it. It is to her foresight that the creation of the first Army Nursing Reserve was due, and it rendered



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very valuable service. Working experience showed, however, as nothing else could, that as originally conceived mistakes were made. Each nurse joined it as an individual, and she who had seemed so suitable on enrolment might well prove less valuable after a few years, when she had perhaps specialized in directions of little use in dealing with wounded men. Hence, good as was their aid in South Africa and in the Military Hospitals at home the dispassionate critic pointed out where it could have been better.

The Medical Department of the Admiralty avoided this mistake, and when it decided in 1912 to form a Naval Nursing Reserve it called to its aid the committees and the matrons of a number of the hospitals with the most highly reputed schools of nursing attached. Under that scheme, each matron called for volunteers among her sisters and nurses to be placed on a roll which she would revise and submit every six months to the Medical Department. She further entered into an agreement as to how many nurses she could provide at six hours' notice, how many at a fortnight's notice, and how many at a subsequent period. In this way the roll was always complete, and always held the names of those most suited to reinforce the regular service.

At the outset of the war, Queen Alexandra's Naval Service consisted of some sixty members. The estimate of the numbers of women who would be wanted when the Grand Fleet would meet the enemy was 250. But, with the same reversal of much that was expected in this as in many things, this large number was not called up in the first six months of the war, and three head sisters at Haslar, Devonport, and Chatham respectively, seven superin-

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tending sisters and sixty nursing sisters represented the regular staff, while a hundred reserve nursing sisters were added to the list.

No women nurses are carried on the fighting ships, where the wounded after an action are tended by the sick bay men, who have received all their training under the ladies at the three chief hospitals. The withdrawal of all these men to the ships themselves left the wards of course depleted of all who did the work in peace time corresponding to that of the probationers. Hence the first demands for nurses of the reserve were to take their places.

These were the first nurses actually to be mobilized, and it was on August 4 that the first party drawn from the London Hospital went to take up their new duties. Haslar was their destination, and since then they have been joined by others from St. Thomas's, the Middlesex Hospitals, and the Sheffield Infirmary, bringing up the number to about thirty. On the same day another party went away from St. Bartholomew's to Chatham, and it is these groups of ladies who will always be able to look back upon the distinction of having been the very first to be called upon to meet whatever the dire exigencies of war might lay upon them.

There has been one innovation in the present war that has escaped the notice it merits, and that is the presence of women nurses on the hospital ships in attendance on the Fleet. Of course women nurses on hospital ships are no new thing, and the vessels which fulfilled this work of mercy in bringing home the wounded from South Africa all carried most able and efficient staffs of them. But in that case there was no enemy at sea, and in this war the enemy is utterly unmindful of any of the conventions of civilized

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warfare, and has even attempted to torpedo the "Asturias," one of the military "carrier ships" for the wounded between Havre and Southampton.

There are six hospital ships in attendance on the fighting—the "China," "Drina," "Garth Castle," "Plassey," "Rewa," and "Soudan." In the secrecy that has to be observed as to all movements connected with the Navy no one knows where they are, but they are always in readiness to come to the battleships, cruisers, and torpedo flotillas directly an action is over. On every one of these are two nursing sisters of the Naval Service and two of the Reserve, and their names duly appear as officers of the ships in the Navy list. These ladies have shared truly in the perils of the seas, and bore as brave and calm a part as any in the wild storm on the East Yorkshire coast in October when the "Rohilla"—the seventh of the ships—was wrecked off Whitby. Upon a ledge of sharp rock the splendid vessel literally broke up, and though not much more than half a mile from the shore it was almost impossible to reach her in the raging seas that were running.

The very vivid account in the *Yorkshire Post* told how on her feeble and tottering superstructure, huddled together, wedged almost into a solid mass, the captain and a hundred other human souls, half naked, chilled to the bone by enormous waves that swept over them every minute with a roar like thunder, waited with sinking hearts for the help that failed to reach them. Every now and then the captain signalled to the shore, and inch by inch calculated how much closer his vessel was to her doom. At mid-day he sent the message that nearly twenty men were dead from exhaustion.

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She had struck between 3 and 4 A.M., and not until the first streaks of grey dawn could the smaller of Whitby's two lifeboats get out amid the rousing cheers of the strained and anxious spectators. The ship herself, too, managed to launch one of her own boats, but it appeared almost a certainty it would be swamped. It lived, however, through the waves, and brought a line by which it was hoped to establish a connection for cradle life-saving apparatus with the ship.

This unhappily snapped under the great strain, but the lifeboat had got alongside, and the crew saw, with characteristic British chivalry, that the four nurses and the stewardess were the first to be put in it.

The nurses were taken to an hotel, and after medical treatment and rest made good recoveries. An extract from the *London Hospital Gazette* tells the sequel in the words of its own matron, who does not bestow her commendations broadcast:

"Miss Muriel Benington, an 'Old Londoner,' who left us three years ago to join the Q.A.R.N.N.S., was one of the nurses on board the ill-fated 'Rohilla' when she was wrecked. It was a terrible experience for them all. It appears that, owing to the darkness and to the violent gale which prevailed at the time, the 'Rohilla' was driven ten miles out of her course. Nurse spoke with admiration of the courage and calmness of all present during the dreadful time they passed through before they were rescued.

"It speaks well for those nurses that the desire of them all is to return to work on another hospital ship. The Admiralty, after granting them a fortnight's leave to recover from the effects of the shipwreck, considerately thought they would prefer being stationed

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at home Naval Hospitals after what they had gone through. But, on learning that this was not the case, they kindly promised to arrange matters so that the nurses, whose courage seems to be of the same quality as that of our sailors and soldiers, should be on duty on hospital ships again."

Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service is a far larger organization, and constitutes a branch of the Army Medical Department. South Africa taught us that the small service until then maintained was quite insufficient even on a peace footing. One of the first works of reorganization that followed upon that protracted struggle was that of the nursing system, and Queen Alexandra very soon after King Edward's Accession placed herself at the head of a small working committee which included Countess Roberts, Viscount Knutsford, Viscountess Downe, and two or three hospital matrons of great experience.

It was in April 1902 that the reconstituted service came into existence, and the War Office for the first time saw ladies in official position within its walls. A Matron-in-Chief was in supreme direction of the new service, and its present wonderful efficiency is largely due to the singularly fortunate and happy appointment made to create this new dignity.

The choice fell upon Miss Sidney Browne, R.R.C., who had had a most extensive experience of nursing both in peace and war. She was trained partly in a big provincial hospital, and before she entered the old Army Service had gained much valuable knowledge at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Her first sight of work in the field was gained in 1884–1885, when she was one of a plucky little party of nurses at Suakin, with an ever-present danger that the hospital camp might be

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"rushed" by the Dervishes. A long round of work in the chief military hospitals at home followed, and she was almost the first to be sent out in charge of the nursing in one of the General Hospitals in South Africa, where she remained until the war was over.

As she took over the direction she found a staff of eighty-seven nurses for the whole army. She had to make a system adequate for peace, and elastic enough to meet the strain of a great war. She accomplished all this, retired, as it appeared, to well-earned rest after three years of as strenuous labour as any woman could possibly fulfil, to be recalled to constitute the whole new scheme for territorial nursing which has been of the most untold value in these last months. Not one person in a hundred would recognize her name mentioned in general company, yet to her foresight, her clear sense, the high traditions she set up, is due the noble efficiency of the Army Service at this moment.

Her immediate successor was Miss Keer, R.R.C., who was partly a Canadian by birth, and brought some new ideas to bear on her post as her own training had been largely in American Hospitals. She again left the Service stronger than she found it, and introduced some useful innovations as to the care of the wives and children of the garrison towns.

To-day, maintaining the same isolation as the heads of other departments at the War Office, Miss Becher, R.R.C., is Matron-in-Chief. Her term of office had nearly expired on the outbreak of war, but she was asked to remain at her post, and, with the public spirit that women generally have shown, she at once consented to do so. She has two assistant matrons on her Staff, and it is no small task that is directed from her office. The Army Service at present numbers

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24 matrons, 104 sisters, 150 staff nurses, and a large reserve. The Home Hospitals are at Netley—which is the chief centre of training for the nurses in the interval between the great general hospitals where they have received all their preliminary training, and being posted to one of the Military hospitals—Woolwich, Millbank, Salisbury Plain, Aldershot, the Curragh, as well as several smaller centres. At each of these is a matron, and sisters and staff nurses in proportion to the numbers of patients received. The training of the orderlies of the Royal Army Medical Corps in peace time is directed by these qualified ladies.

When the war is over perhaps we shall be told all the circumstances under which the nurses of Queen Alexandra's Service and the Reserve were called up for duty. At present only an occasional glimpse is permitted through the semi-private pages of a hospital magazine. But we do know that some 250 nurses left just after the middle of August, all together on one ship bound for "a destination unknown," which was of course a French port. Moreover, they remained on this for a few days after their arrival, and then by gradual degrees, first one and then another base hospital was established and the nursing staffs posted to them. Reinforcements went out as required, but during the first six weeks or so of the war there was no great strain on the accommodation.

Most of the nurses first sent abroad found themselves moved from place to place very quickly. They had hardly begun work in one locality before the approach of the enemy made the authorities transfer them to safer surroundings. Once their retreat was so hurried that they were told to leave all their belongings and their stores behind. Two of the London

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Hospital nurses could not, however, bring themselves to leave for the Germans a supply of eggs which they had just received. So they boiled them hard, and stuffed all available pockets and receptacles with them. The eggs proved very acceptable to their patients later on.

No one has given a more vivid account of the nursing in these earliest days than Sister Kiddle of Guy's Hospital, in a letter dated from Versailles, September 28. She found it "so strange in an up-to-date hospital and struggling to do up-to-date nursing with about one-tenth of the things one needs to do it with, but we really manage excellently. None of us regret having given up our 'soft jobs,' and we none of us ever mean to say we know what hard work is again, because our Tommies have shown us what that really is. . . . Some of them have been wounded three or four days before they get to us, so the state they are in can be imagined, and yet they are cheerful. A few of them cannot forget the sights they have seen and live through them continually. Their state of mind is dreadful."

Long as it is, the letter must be quoted, for it is as real a picture of what the splendid women of the Reserve have faced and done as any that we shall ever get, and there is not a woman who will not read it with a thrill of pride at its wise and kindly sympathy:

"When we arrived at the Trianon Hotel, our future hospital, the hotel staff were still removing furniture, and the R.A.M.C. men were busy unpacking the whole of the hospital equipment. We came out quite expecting to work under army people, but here we are in charge of our own wards and running them as much like Guy's as possible.

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" My ward consists of one side of a long corridor, with fifteen rooms, each room taking from two to five patients, and each having a little balcony. Both the air and the view from the windows are lovely, and, of course, much nicer than tents from the patient's point of view. Unfortunately the floors are covered with Brussels carpets, which are spoilt already, and the worry of my present existence if I happen to have time to look at them.

" My patients were forty on the first day; but the next day eight more beds were sent up, and a week later we had hurriedly to make up twenty-five more in the corridor. I have one nurse from the Derby General Hospital, and one nursing and one working orderly, so you can imagine how busy we are. Mr. Passey is splendid in helping us all day long. I have three patients who know Guy's well, and one that was quite a frequent visitor to Clinical when his sister was in 'Miriam.' I remembered him at once when I caught sight of him as they were bringing him in, and he was so pleased to find some one he knew. He has a nasty compound fracture of the femur, but is doing well and has got to the stage of taking interest in the war news.

" We had a busy time getting our ward ready. We set apart a bathroom as surgery, a wardrobe (not removed by the hotel staff) as linen cupboard, and a second wardrobe as store cupboard, and then had to get them stocked. 'Kits' (I never want to hear the word again) are not supposed to be given out until the patient arrives; however, I got most of the things required, linen, crockery, etc.

" Before sending to the dispensary for ointments, etc., we hunted round the deserted kitchens and came across a nice stock of little brown earthenware jars

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with lids, which made excellent pots. They would look quite smart in Out-Patients on a Tuesday afternoon. I also commandeered some marble-topped tables, bedroom jugs, and basins, and they have been more than useful. By 5 o'clock we were quite straight and ready for anything.

"Although the arrival of the ambulance has become quite a common sight it is by no means less grim. How glad I am their people do not see them as they arrive here! The colonel, with a big book, stands on the steps, with him are a major, captain, and the R.M.O.'s of the different wards. Outside the sergeant is most busy getting stretcher-bearers and orderlies into position. Inside beds are turned down and quarts of hot milk, etc., ready, and the theatre awaiting any emergency.

"The first ambulance draws up and the stretcher-bearers remove the first patient. The major finds out, roughly, what is wrong, the colonel decides where he shall go, and the captain (who is R.S.O. and surgeon-in-chief) gives orders. The R.M.O. follows the cases to his own ward. In less than two hours nearly 300 poor fellows are admitted. The whole proceeding is too awful and too real to describe.

"Never shall I forget that 'take-in' to my own ward—some walking, some carried, some on stretchers, all in one continuous stream. There was no time for undressing, and we found ourselves with a ward full of patients on the beds, but by no means in them.

"Then came the great task of getting them undressed and into bed. They were all so dirty, tired, hungry, and some so ill, even apart from their injuries. They had been marching for days on practically nothing, and then had a hard fight at the end of it.

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Some arrived with hardly anything on; one man had half a coat and a hat, one leg had been amputated on the field, and he was looking just awful, but so pleased to be put comfy in bed and to get a hot drink, and, above all—a smoke. He got on splendidly for the first 24 hours, and then the following morning his jaw was stiff and he had one or two nasty spasms, and you can guess the rest. We tried everything, of course, but Dr. Shipway's continuous oxygen and ether is by far the nicest treatment. We are trying serum as a preventative, and not as a curative now; the Pasteur Institute presented the hospital with an unlimited supply.

"They were all splendid, and I just wish you could have seen us. We went round and sorted out those who were really bad. Three only had to go to the theatre immediately—no time for half-hourly pulses, etc.—and we attended them first.

"They had all come along lying on straw and quite a quantity managed to stick to their clothes, so that by the time we had them undressed the rooms resembled a stable rather than a bedroom of a first-class hotel. Their socks had shrunk so around their ankles that it was quite impossible to remove them without the aid of scissors; this caused great amusement, and one man looking like a 'teddy bear' would call out to another resembling 'shock-headed Peter,' 'After you with the cutters, Jock,' and many pairs of socks were chopped from many poor sore feet.

"One wanted to wash all of them there and then (the men I mean, not the socks)—but no time to think of that until the more necessary part of the work was performed. The fractured femurs, etc., we fixed into temporary splints padded at the bedsides. They were

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all compound with several other wounds and most difficult to fix comfortably without our old friend 'Hodgen.' The men were simply splendid and did not murmur, although the pain they had to bear must have been enormous. Some of the wounds one could do little to until they had been X-rayed, etc. The shrapnel were the nasty ones, the bullet being marvellously clean. I wonder if you have seen a piece of shrapnel; it is fiendish stuff and plays great havoc wherever it manages to lodge.

"Iodine was the order of the day, and it has proved a great success; have not seen one clean wound go wrong—this would please Mr. Saner. We came off about 3 A.M., leaving Mr. Passey and Sister Beardshaw still very busy. In the middle of all these happenings we were attending the usual 'Infusion of Saline,' etc. How nice it would be if we could only command as many pairs of hands and feet as we sometimes feel we need. I would like at least three instead of a miserable one.

"By 8 A.M. next morning we were busy again. The men felt better already for their rest, and all the next day they did practically nothing but sleep; they were just tired out. There was still no time to think of washing all the poor things properly. The bad ones of course we did thoroughly, and you cannot imagine how awful it felt to do only just what was necessary for the rest. When we had got things fairly straight, our Medical Officer appeared on the scene, and we were very busy for the remainder of the day doing dressings and fixing up apparatus for splints, etc. It was quite three days before all our patients were able to have a good wash. Of course it makes things much more difficult having rooms instead of one big ward, and to

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begin with we had to boil all our water, as the boilers of the hotel were not working. Now we get a good supply of hot water, which is a great comfort. As soon as our men are well enough to be moved we send them to the tents in the grounds, where they remain until they are well enough to be transferred to the Base, and either home to England or back to light duty.

"Last Monday we had to transfer thirty at a moment's notice, as we heard that a convoy of wounded were expected. We had news about twenty-four hours beforehand that they were coming, but the transports were so delayed that we almost ceased to expect them. We returned to the hospital after supper and awaited their arrival, which began about 11.30 P.M. Thirty stretcher cases were sent to me, all very bad, and it was really quite difficult to know which to attend first. It is just awful how you are on the continual watch for one dread symptom, how you spot it at once, isolate it immediately, and yet with all one's careful treatment, what result?—none that is good.

"I want to tell you all sorts of things about the treatment we are using for our patients, but the Censor would not pass my letter. I guess he will get somewhat tired of this one. All our second batch of patients were in the same fight as the first, and most of them wounded at the same time, so that they were not in nearly such good condition; some have been lying in the trenches for days, some had crawled into a forest, others were put into a church, and quite a number into a big cave, practically with nothing to eat and getting very little sleep, except where too exhausted to keep awake. One poor man, the only survivor of his corps, had crawled about from hedge to hedge during the night for two weeks with nothing to eat except one tin of bully-beef



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and what else he could find on the roadside. His wounds were awful, and all this time of course were not attended to, so perhaps you can picture what he was like, poor chap; I don't think he ever realized even when he was with us that he was safe again; his face was too sad to describe, and he looked just like some poor hunted animal. Another man was very badly burned by a shell bursting by the side of him in the trenches. His head, face, chest, back, hands, and arms are very badly burnt, and he is quite delirious and lives through everything again. It makes me creep. It takes over an hour to dress him every day, so I have to do a little bit at a time. Every one declares he is not going to do, but he just must: he's a splendid fellow, and he really is no worse than he was three days ago."

Those middle days of August brought unceasing work to every hospital matron up and down the country. First she had to adjust her staff to meet the calls of either the Naval or Military Reserves. Every one of the twenty-three General Hospitals of the Territorial Army also mobilized, making huge gaps in the ranks of nurses and sisters alike. To mention the Metropolis alone, the 1st London General Hospital, which took over the buildings of St. Gabriel's College, Camberwell, was provided entirely by St. Bartholomew's with its medical and nursing personnel. That meant demands upon private nursing establishments, and wherever reliable and fully trained women could be found, and meantime the general work of the wards could not be allowed to suffer.

Moreover, the privately equipped hospitals to go out to Belgium were wanting nurses. Among the very first assistance of this kind to be sent was by Mr.

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Alfred de Rothschild, who within a week of the invasion of Belgium despatched a party of twenty to Brussels. The Duchess of Westminster also sent a contingent, all of whom held very high professional certificates.

Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland, has related some of her experiences in a little book, as to what she and her staff did at Namur, in these early days of the invasion of Belgium. Another member of the party has supplemented it, and her narrative shows how nurses have gone through some of the most nerve-racking dangers:

"During the whole of the morning of August 23 the Germans shelled the citadel, which is obsolete and undefended, but was marked on their maps as a fort. The shells were shrieking over our convent up till 2 P.M., when the German infantry entered the town singing. These formed up in the market-place and a great many civilians came out of their cellars to watch them. At that moment another force which had been attacking from the south and had come from Dinant, not knowing the town had fallen, began shelling again and dropped five shells in the midst of their own men, killing, as we afterwards heard, about fifty Germans and many civilians.

"During all this time we were besieged at frequent intervals by batches of terrified civilians who were admitted to our vast cellars. Most of the nuns and all the novices had been there ever since the bombardment started, acutely conscious of, and anticipating again, the times of pillage and murder through which the convent had passed after Waterloo, first by the retreating French and later by the victorious Prussians.

"That evening at about 8.30 P.M. we heard a

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fusillade of small arms in the town, which lasted about twenty minutes. We pulled down our blinds and put out all lights, as some of the shots were in our street, and thinking the French had come we expected a tremendous battle. However, it stopped after about half an hour, and we were left in doubt as to its meaning.

"We were just going to turn in, at about 10 o'clock, when we heard the fire tocsin, and on going up into our old tower we saw that the town was on fire in four places, all round us. Knowing that most of the houses were very old and made of wood we were rather anxious, but the night was so absolutely calm that although the firemen took two and a half days to extinguish everything, there was not much danger, and not more than 200 houses were burnt. If the slightest wind had arisen the whole town must have been destroyed."

The British Red Cross Society, foreseeing that great calls were likely to be made upon their resources, began their preparations as early as August 2. Nurses from all parts of the country offered their services, especially for work abroad, and there was such an abundance then of the most excellent material that it was possible to establish a very high standard of training and efficiency. Lady Gifford, who had had considerable practical experience of nursing in South Africa, and Mrs. Ludlow, R.R.C., who had been in charge of the hospital throughout the siege of Ladysmith, and was subsequently matron of the Royal Free Hospital, personally saw all the applicants after making it a preliminary condition that they must have had a full three-years' course of training and hold excellent certificates.

The first party of British Red Cross nurses to leave set forth on August 12 for Brussels, full of high expectations of being able to render valuable help to the

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Belgians, who even thus early had had the opportunity of letting the world know their powers of heroic resistance. The matron of this party was Miss Richardson, and with her were six nurses. Three days later Miss Stollard took out a yet larger contingent of eighteen, and Miss Wright went with twenty-two nurses. Two more groups—one of eleven in charge of Miss Beatrice Cutler, and another of sixteen directed by Miss Violetta Thurstan—set out on August 19, while yet another that went about this time had as matron Miss Broad and nine nurses. All remained in Brussels until October 17, the day on which the enemy seized the city and gave the brave women very little time to leave the place.

Very interesting indeed are some of the letters that these plucky and devoted women wrote home in the early days of the war:

"I shall always," writes one nurse, "remember that first night in Brussels, lying awake listening to the wounded being brought in, and then when the dawn came seeing straight in front of me through the window a big golden cross on the top of a dome. It stood there, a symbol of victory over sin, sorrow, and suffering (and a few hours later—it was Sunday morning—many of us gathered strength from the same source and knew that He was with us). A week passed, and we were still amongst the unemployed, and so able to see the Germans take possession of the city. Many of them marched past our hotel looking more dejected than triumphant. Very soon afterwards our party was a scattered one, and some had commenced work at ambulances. Those who had been given work at the Palais Royale Ambulance had to wait until they were wanted, and this meant meeting outside the gates for orders every morning at 9 A.M."

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Later on, these ladies found plenty to do, but under difficulties with the clinical centigrade thermometers, which were clumsy to use, while the electric light was often cut off. The party also encountered great difficulties, when, after all patients had been taken from them, they wished to leave. Eventually they managed to get away when the enemy was engaged in other directions, and with their belongings on a small cart reached Ghent in safety.

To be in Brussels through these days was an experience that called for nerve and courage. Miss Thurstan had occasion to visit some of her nurses who were scattered in small hospitals about the middle of September, and in doing so entered the German lines, and the account she wrote home to the *British Journal of Nursing* shows her coolness and resourcefulness—qualities which, it may be said, assisted her afterwards actually in Lodz:

"Then firing began again within 150 yards of us, and a man shouted to us to get under cover quick. So we dashed in with him behind a manure heap, but the owner came out and would not allow us to stay there, and told us to go to a hotel, so we went along, and then five or six German soldiers passed us, running away for their lives. They brushed against my cloak as they passed, and stopped for a second, and I thought they were going to shoot us. . . . They fled on, and then some cyclists, German soldiers, flashed past us, then horses galloping. A Belgian outpost had surprised a German outpost. So we went rather quickly along to the hotel, and when they saw us coming they shut the door in our faces. We parleyed with them through the window, and they said it would be dangerous for them if we came in. So we tried to get out of

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the village (the mitrailleuse was still going on), but no one was allowed to leave the village, and the road we had come by was blocked too. We stood in the street a few minutes, and then a doctor came up and bundled us into a convent.

"We waited about half an hour, but then heard that both ways out of the village were blocked, and the nuns advised us to try and get back to Brussels (about thirteen miles away) by a back lane which led out of the convent to the high road eventually. We walked about two miles down this peaceful country road, seeing no one, when we came to a place where four roads met. There was a woman at a tiny farm, and I asked her the way. She spoke only Flemish, of which I know very little, and either she misunderstood me or I misunderstood her, but I understood her to say that we must go down a very muddy little lane, which we did.

"At the bottom was a German sentinel, but we didn't think much of that, and I have my brassard stamped with the German eagle now, so I showed that as I passed, and he saluted and said 'Pardon,' and we passed on. *Now* I realize that he thought I was a German Sister of Mercy, my uniform being very plain and black, or else he would not have let us pass, for in two minutes we fell right into the whole German camp—thousands of them, with cannons, wagons, camp fires, everything.

"An officer came up and asked what we wanted. He, of course, saw at once I was not German, so I got out my Belgian *carte d'identité*. My companion did not speak French or German, so I had to do the conversation, and mercifully she kept still and did not lose her head. He searched us and let us go, but we were right in the thick of them, and did not know how to

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get out nor which way to go. We went the wrong way first, and had to retrace our footsteps. At last we got on the Brussels road, but had to pass seven sentinels, none of whom discovered we were English, luckily for us, as they hate the English much more than the Belgians. We were searched twice, and I had to show my *carte d'identité* each time. Luckily, I had got it stamped with the German eagle, so we got through.

"We had nearly got to Brussels when an officer came galloping after us and asked me every question under the sun. I had to say we were English, and he was so astounded at our cheek in walking clean through all the German lines that at last, after scoldings and threats, he let us go, and we got back safe. The account of the skirmish was in the paper, and it said several were wounded, which we did not know then."

Meantime, some of the nurses had left Brussels and had gone to Charleroi. There were some 2000 Germans in the place, which they had burned and pillaged, and the nurses had a very trying and difficult time there. Hardly any food was obtainable, but all was borne in a wonderful spirit of desire to help in the mitigation of suffering.

Antwerp may be said to mark the next phase of Englishwomen's devoted service in these early days of the war. Two small nursing contingents were sent here late in August, and were followed by others. Here, of course, none remained after the Germans secured the town, but even when the shells were flying over the town, and no respect whatever was paid to the emblem of humanity in warfare, the first and all-compelling desire was to fulfil the mission of mercy they had undertaken, even though they were facing the most trying and dangerous experiences. An

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American gentleman who actually witnessed what he described at the British Field Hospital, where Miss Theresa Bryan was matron, wrote that the ladies all refused to leave their wounded patients:

"In the thick of the bombardment the wounded were carried out to motor-omnibuses waiting in the street—the Boulevard Léopold—some partly dressed, some merely wrapped in blankets. . . .

"Nearly two hours must have been spent in getting the wounded dressed and into the omnibuses; meanwhile shells were crashing into the pavement along the Boulevard Léopold, one burst in the court at the rear of the hospital, another blew off a cornice not more than 50 yards away, and all this time those who had been the first to be moved into the street had to wait. . . . Nothing could have been more admirable than the behaviour of the entire personnel under these trying conditions—very literally under fire. Every one seemed to feel it necessary to explain that he or she was leaving only because ordered to do so, and nurses and orderlies worked about the omnibuses, making their helpless soldiers as comfortable as possible, and as cheerful and unconcerned as if German shells were no more than summer rain.

"I had seen some men that morning in the trenches, and their coolness under a fire they were helpless to answer was superb. . . . These nurses had not even trenches to shelter them, and it took a rather unforeseen and difficult kind of courage to leave a fairly safe masonry building, go out into the open street, and sit smiling and helpful on the top of a motor-omnibus during a wait of half an hour or so, any second of which might be one's last."

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# CHAPTER VI

## AN AUTUMN AT WORK

**What girls' schools did—Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association—For the men afloat—The typist and needlecraft—Needs of the professional classes—The Society of Friends—Ladies' clubs.**

As the children went back to school, and the days grew shorter in a marvellous September of sunshine, women began to make their serious plans and to think what each one could do. The girls saw many possibilities, and those not already enrolled in ambulance classes or voluntary aid detachments joined them and began the necessary studies. In the country parishes no less than in the towns energetic women undertook preliminary organization, and the local hospital, perhaps at the manor house or some fine mansion offered to the War Office, became a centre at which help of all kinds could be utilized, from that of the humble worker who offered to do three hours' scrubbing a week up to the offer of the wealthy neighbour who could give a whole X-ray installation.

There was one Surrey village where the inhabitants had undertaken to maintain a hospital for thirty beds, and the Red Cross Society had accepted the assistance. Every one was promising their monetary support of shillings up to guineas a week to the honorary treasurer,



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who had really hesitated to ask anything from one elderly woman with very little beyond her old-age pension on which to live. She met the treasurer one afternoon and asked why she had not yet been to her. The treasurer said something vague about the duty of the richer folk first, but the old lady said she wished to contribute 2d. a week.

Some delays arose before the hospital was actually in working order, and meantime the old woman had contracted pneumonia and in a very few days had passed away. But in the drawer where her special little treasures were kept, tenpence—the contribution for five weeks—was found wrapped in paper and inscribed in a very shaky hand, "For the soldiers' Hospital." Could anything have shown more finely the spirit that was animating every woman?

At the schools, too, even the most conservative of teachers had to realize that the vacation had brought about a wholly new outlook on the part of the girls, not only as to what they desired to learn and study, but also as to their spare time. The Headmistresses' Association considered the position, and saw the advisability of co-ordinating the really valuable help that it would be possible for girls of the middle classes to render, and thus the Girls' Patriotic Union of Secondary Schools came into existence, under the presidency of Miss Robertson of Christ's Hospital. Before long there were no fewer than 300 girls' schools up and down the land, brought thus in touch with one another, able to exchange the results of experience, and all zealous to be of help.

Broadly speaking, their efforts fell into two groups. There was, on the part of many girls, especially those with brothers or friends serving at the front, or under

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training, a desire to work for the troops. Under the wise direction of the teachers this wish could be turned to account in many useful ways. Some, for example, in the neighbourhood of training camps undertook all the mending and darning of clothes and uniforms, collected at intervals and returned with business-like punctuality. Others undertook to collect jam, chocolate, books, and simple comforts that would add to the amenities of camp-life. Help for the Red Cross either in the form of gifts to its central organization or to a local hospital was also freely given.

The second aspect was that of relief, as in working for the Belgian refugees. In some cases a school would undertake the support of a whole family, getting a house free or at greatly reduced rent, supplying the garments necessary, and raising money by various means for their food. Equally, cases of poverty among English people were traced out and helped, or poor girls were placed under training for some useful craft. But whatever project was adopted, there was the indirect educational influence of getting the girls to think about the most practical means of rendering assistance, and a check to that merely emotional form of aid which thinks all is done when a coin has been bestowed. Moreover, the letter sent out to the schools carefully pointed out that " while wishing to encourage school girls to undertake any work that they can usefully carry out, we desire to emphasize the great importance of providing paid employment as far as possible for those who need it."

In that way a spirit of personal self-sacrifice was brought into the work. The forgoing of some luxury meant money enough to pay some poor widow perhaps to make up shirts. Some boarding-schools saw a

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voluntary renunciation of all sugar in tea, others asked that cakes or jam or both should be taken off the tea-table, valuable prizes were to be given up and some cheap badge or device was to be awarded instead, or collecting-boxes were expected as a point of school honour not to contain less than a sum calculated upon the donations of all from the weekly pocket-money. The Union, after months of working, was more than satisfied with what had been achieved in the awakening of a much more intelligent idea of how help should be given, and had awakened a new sense of helpful sympathy that could not fail to be of future usefulness.

The Union, moreover, advised on special courses of reading that would stimulate interest in the daily records of the newspapers. History and geography assumed an importance they had never before enjoyed, and such practical matters as home hygiene, elementary nursing, and invalid cooking acquired new meanings. The corporate effort, too, broadened their survey, and in bringing before the girls the finer and more chivalrous issues of the war had served a truly valuable purpose in emphasizing the necessity for courage and cheerfulness in distress, while inculcating restraint and moderation when the hour of victory comes.

A great deal of work soon arose on behalf of the wives, children, and dependants of men called away to the colours, and especially of the Reservists. As far as the great dockyard or garrison towns were concerned, the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association was fully organized and prepared for its task. The ladies working there are in fact constantly on duty. They knew what it meant for a ship to commission for a foreign station or a regiment to leave for India, and all that such orders meant to those left behind. They

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are wise, discreet, friendly, and the women pass the word on from one to another that they can look for real help and reliable advice from this or that lady.

In theory, every county and every district had its lady workers in touch with the County Association and the central body. But since the South African War, when the whole machinery had been tested and made good, there had been some slackening, and the suddenness with which the need arose last autumn found that in many places the working was far from efficient. Not a few who professed to be responsible for looking after the homes knew little as to the scale of allowances in the Army pay or even the rate of grants that the Association could make. They did not even know how the wife of, say, a Reservist of the Lincolnshire Regiment living in London should apply to the Officer of Records at the Depôt.

At the outset, therefore, there was a certain amount of ill-working. Stories—many of them incredible—got afloat of overdressed amateurs telling women who had decent homes that nothing could be done for them while they had so much furniture they could pawn. Hard cases arose, of poor women in perhaps bad health being sent from pillar to post by one fussy person to another for the particular little bit of assistance required, which common sense would have given without so much red tape. But such things soon passed. The incompetent either dropped out of the work or did what was better, and went to the right quarters to be made efficient. For one of the finest facts of the war has been that women realizing that they were not up to a standard of capability either strove to attain this or sought some other field of usefulness.

Out of such information as is now available it is

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possible to estimate the extraordinary difficulties with which a great organization like the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association were confronted in these latter days of August, and instead of being critical to marvel at the readiness with which the machinery was set in motion. Does any one in these days grasp in the least that on August 4 the Army Pay Office had the names of only 1500 soldiers' wives—those married "on the strength"—on its books? Such was the case, though the fact, announced in noble and glowing words by Mr. Asquith when stating that all soldiers' wives were to stand on an equal footing for the duration of the war and for pensions, brought it to knowledge within a fortnight that the numbers of women who would be entitled to separation would be 250,000, and that some system of weekly payments would be necessary. By this time, it may be added, the total is considerably over 300,000.

It is now frankly admitted that the War Office could not at that time provide an organization equal to coping with such an enormous accession of work. Only one among many of the problems to be faced was that in hundreds of instances, especially of the men who had married "off the strength," their home addresses were unknown. For this reason there were often inevitable delays in the payment of separation allowances. Meantime, the Prince of Wales' National Relief Fund was growing hourly; there was clamour on the part of the public that hardships to the soldier's wife must cease, and the committee of this Fund decided to grant assistance to all necessitous cases.

Then it was that the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association was asked to assume primary responsibility for the distribution of such money. In such cases as

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this could not undertake, Local Relief Committees were invoked, and the money that has been expended through these channels together had reached the big total of £1,400,000 by March 1. At the outset the only dependants recognized officially were the wife and children of the soldier, and one of the first and most useful movements on the part of the Association was to secure help for parents, especially widowed mothers who had been dependent on their sons. The sisters, even crippled and disabled brothers sometimes had claims, and a few local branches found instances of real hardship where an aunt had brought up and made a home for a nephew, who, when he grew up, helped to maintain her.

One county branch or division after another came into efficient line. Honorary Secretaries of county branches are not invariably women, for in some cases, as in Cumberland with the Earl of Lonsdale, or East Scotland with Brigadier-General Kelly, men have assumed the duties; but among the ladies who have thus acted are Lady Beatrix Stanley (Lancashire), Lady Lloyd-Mostyn (Denbighshire), the Hon. Lady Fremantle (Buckinghamshire), Lady Maud Rolleston (Nottinghamshire), Lady Holm Patrick (Dublin), and many more. To-day it can be claimed that the organization covers the country very completely. It has enlisted the wives and daughters of the clergy and the professional classes in the towns and villages in direct personal touch with different households, and there are over 1000 fully staffed divisions up and down the land. Roughly speaking, half a million cases were dealt with in the first six months of the war, and none may say what has been the total of the kindly and direct interest thus brought to bear. Real friend-

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ships have grown up, the anxious wife has come to feel that some one can advise her on the little difficulties that must arise when the husband and father is absent, and the worker herself has acquired a new sympathy with the lives of so many of her sisters. The Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association will have borne a worthy part in that newer spirit of mutual understanding and esteem that will be one of the finest results of the war.

Nor would one overlook the quiet, steady useful work for the wives and families of the men afloat that is being done by Miss Agnes Weston at the Royal Sailors' Rests at Portsmouth, Devonport, and Keyham. As far as the men themselves are concerned, the work has been more or less quiet, for with every available ship in commission, either with the Grand Fleet or in the Mediterranean, there has been less call upon the sleeping cabins, the excellent refreshment rooms, the baths, the library, and the many other attractions that the smart self-respecting sailor men of to-day appreciate so highly.

Portsmouth and Devonport at first suffered less than Chatham in the few hard knocks that the enemy managed to deliver, as in the losses of the "Amphion," and the "Hogue," "Cressy," and "Aboukir." But a great naval battle might well be severely felt in either the southern or the western dockyard town, and that would throw great responsibilities upon Miss Weston and her staff as to the help to be afforded at once to widows, or the many ways in which the wives and families of severely wounded and disabled men might need immediate assistance. Those who remember how readily Miss Weston has come to the aid in such catastrophes as the loss of the "Victoria" or the



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"Serpent" know that all would again be equally available in any possible emergency that the present war could bring about.

Working parties and meetings for the wives are a regular feature of this organization, and these have been carried on without interruption. A very welcome proof of the King's recognition of their value came in the form of a gift from His Majesty and the Queen of 800 useful garments for any members in want of such help. Another specially important off-shoot of the work has been the establishment of clubs for girls, which, as all are agreed, have been a valuable influence in all the towns where large numbers of soldiers under training have been congregated.

The Homes were frequently requisitioned for the billeting of soldiers, who found them amazingly comfortable after the mud and roughness of the camps. Never, perhaps, did she receive a more sincere message of thanks than was found after one of these contingents had left, pinned to the pillow of a bed:

"May God be ever with you. We thank Miss Weston for her extreme kindness and hospitality during our short stay. Wishing her many more years of happiness, and trusting that she will write to us at the front."

The Homes were made a great distributing centre of comforts for the Fleet, and thousands of parcels filled with warm shirts, vests, mufflers, helmets, chocolate, tobacco, and so forth, found their way not only to the battleships and cruisers, but to the destroyers, submarines, and mining-craft.

The new buildings at Devonport will be available, should occasion arise, as a Naval Hospital. Many of the cabins are being endowed as memorials of officers

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who have laid down their lives, as in the loss of the "Good Hope" and "Monmouth," and surely it is a fitting manner to recall the names of some of those who heard and saw—

> The muffled knocking stroke,
> The steam that overruns the foam,
> The foam that thins to smoke,
> The smoke that clokes the deep aboil—
> The deep that chokes her throes;
> Till streaked with ash and sleeked with oil,
> The lukewarm whirlpools close.

Some of the most kindly efforts have hardly had record in print. Vaguely, a good many people knew that the little city typist and shorthand writer was a sufferer, but it was only those in the inner circles of commerce who knew how the war had closed down hundreds of small offices whence Germans and Austrians had done their business. A few samples of wares to be sold sufficed, but there was a certain amount of correspondence to be done, and one or more poorly paid girls conducted it. Wistfully did these girls scan advertisement columns at the Free Libraries, or the notice-boards of Labour Exchanges, but no one seemed to want them. Then Sir George Pragnell, of Cook's great wholesale drapery house, who was equally in touch with the War Office on the one hand and the manufacturers on the other, had great influence in placing the contracts of the French War Office for the flannel belts that the rank and file of our Allies like to wear. It was the easiest form of needlework in the world—merely the neat sewing together of two strips of flannel, the binding of a slit, and the attachment of stout webbing. He saw that with the advance only of a few pounds fifty of these girls could be employed.

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A skilful cutter was engaged, an expert examiner was appointed. Each girl on a Monday morning was given ten belts cut out and only needing her handicraft. She brought them back on Tuesday and received half a crown, with another ten to take away. Thus she earned her 12s. 6d. a week, and not only that, as the general originator of the scheme had every one's qualifications noted down, and moving about in the city he was often able to send one to fill the place of a man who had enlisted.

Clubs for married women next claimed attention. Because a small proportion of the wives in the comparative affluence of their separation allowances resorted rather more frequently to the public-houses than was necessary, there went up in certain quarters a very ill-informed outcry on "increasing drunkenness among women." But here, as in many other cases, out of evil came good, for the suggestion of such possibilities set the more practical and kindly among women to investigate first how far there was any ground for such allegations, and secondly, what might be the real feelings of the soldier's wife in the absence of her husband.

Then it became recognized that the woman of this class is somewhat gregarious, and that in going to a public-house there was quite as often a desire to meet others in similar position to herself and to talk over their common concern as to obtain drink. If some attractive centre could be provided where they might see popular papers, obtain good tea, and generally regard as a social gathering-place, the problem surely would be met. Lady Jellicoe and Lady French were consulted, and local committees were soon formed. "Tipperary Rooms" was suggested as a

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useful name, and was adopted by many of the earlier institutions of the kind that quickly sprang into existence. Then we heard of " Women's War Clubs," of " Women's Patriotic Clubs," and so forth, until to promote their general welfare a central League of Women's United Service Clubs was formed.

They fulfilled all expectations. In all parts of the country they sprang up, enlisting the sympathies of women of education and good influence. Weekly recreation evenings proved highly successful, the big maps of the scenes of fighting helped many to a far more intelligent understanding of the positions in which the Allies' troops were placed, and, thanks to the letters from their menfolk, the women found themselves able to take a real interest in all that was moving. Sewing and knitting classes were much appreciated, and very often a course of cooking for convalescents made a great appeal when they realized that nourishing and properly prepared food would be of the utmost value after the husband or son had been discharged from hospital, should he be wounded. There were opportunities, too, for sound advice on the care of the babies, and the movement altogether has been among the most valuable and uplifting of these past months.

This same note of personal, direct kindness entered into the plans of help of various professions. In connection with the Three Arts Club was a movement which did much for musicians, singers, and minor actresses, all of whom were immediate sufferers. The Society of Women Journalists, helped materially by gifts from the Queen and Queen Alexandra, took up the cause of the less fortunate members, and the loan of travelling expenses here, the gift of nice dresses to make good wardrobe deficiencies there, the recommenda-

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tion of a member capable of organizing in other directions elsewhere tided such over the difficult days. The Professional Classes Relief Committee was able to help a number in various walks to keep children at school, to pay for the training of daughters for some useful vocation, or to assist them to emigrate. A hospital with a special maternity ward was arranged in the splendid house in Prince's Gate, once filled with the art treasures of Mr. Pierpont Morgan, thanks to the generosity of his executors, and proved an immense boon to any who had had to give up comfortable homes and make shift for the time in humbler quarters. So general was the sympathy of all to the rest that those who in ordinary circumstances would have shrunk from accepting assistance knew that they could take such friendly aid without loss of self-respect.

In connection with supreme national crises when the stern arbitrament of arms is unavoidable, thoughtless persons may be found to speak somewhat disparagingly of the members of the Society of Friends. Even in the present struggle of the nations, the more conscientious of this body could not bring themselves to sink the principles for which their fathers had willingly laid down life itself, and the thoughtful among us can well respect an attitude that certainly brought no fame or distinction to those who unswervingly maintained it. Yet the members of the Society have rendered real help to the country and to humanity in a way that deserves the thanks of all.

At a time when there was a great deal of exaggerated talk and sensation-mongering as to spies on every hand, a little committee, which included Lady Courtney of Penwith, the Hon. Mrs. Franklin, and other ladies, was promptly formed to deal with

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the unfortunate aliens, many of whom were soon in dire distress in our midst. A central body of existing institutions of this character was formed, and with this the Society of Friends came into touch, and when the problems of the men of military age and the wives and families of married men interned in the camps were more or less met, they could specially devote themselves to looking after women and girls. There were female servants who had been in hotels and private families; there were teachers and governesses; and these with the help of the American Embassy could be sent back to their own countries. But there were hard cases that seemed to come under no one's care, as that of a typical German *Hausfrau*, bent with hard work, who has lived thirty years in England, has a son in the British army at the front fighting for her adopted country, but the father and she are not naturalized. The father lost his place as waiter with a large catering concern, where he had been employed uninterruptedly for thirteen years, and bore an excellent character. His eldest girl, though English, has lost her situation owing to her German name.

Unhappy young English wives, knowing not what to do when their German or Austrian husbands were interned, found help when they most needed it, and in a score of ways the gentle and gracious ladies of the Society gave their aid. Situations were found for several who had been servants before marriage, and forty-six maternity cases between August and December were properly cared for at Dr. Annie M'Caul's House. Underlying all was the hope and faith that something was being done to preserve from the destructiveness of war some of the links of love and sympathy which should always bind together the nations of Christendom.

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The smallest things that can be saved from disaster now will serve as foundations on which to build a brighter and a better future. All those who have supported and promoted the work have, the Friends believe, done so in obedience to the spirit of Love, which knows no barriers of race or creed.

Further, the Friends took to heart St. Paul's great monition as to " diversities of gifts," and realized that through the Spirit is bestowed to one the word of wisdom, to another the gift of healing, to another diverse kinds of tongues, and to another the interpreting of tongues. All these have been utilized in the formation of an ambulance unit, trained under Colonel Cantlie, for work at Dunkirk. These men later on rendered great assistance in the severe epidemic of enteric that seized upon the civil population later in the year in the Ypres tract.

More especially for the poor women, a hospital was founded at Chalons and placed in nursing charge of Miss Edith Pye. Another excellent and useful undertaking of the Friends was to employ Belgian carpenters too old for military service to construct wooden huts in sections easily transported and put together, that will afford shelter to the sorely ill-used peasantry as soon as they can come back to their former homesteads, while they are rebuilding their burnt and ruined dwellings. Thus, among other ways, all good and practical, has this peace-loving community helped to heal some of the awful ravages of war.

Perhaps the women's clubs have not enjoyed all the recognition of an aggregate of useful enterprise that they fully merit. At the Lyceum Club, for example, three or four useful undertakings were started among the members, the first of which was a " League of

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*Photo*] [*Sport & General.*

**A SECTION OF WOMEN POLICE VOLUNTEERS MARCHING IN HYDE PARK.**

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Help," with Mrs. Smedley as organizer. This was formulated to work with as much elasticity as possible, and to provide work where this would be most useful. It collected many comforts in the form of warm clothing for the troops, the sailors, and the Royal Flying Corps. Nor were the trawlers forgotten in this direction, or the men on remote " wireless " stations when the distribution was made. Thousands of partially worn garments were collected from the members and their friends for the destitute Belgian refugees. Help, too, was given to poor mothers where ordinary work had fallen off.

There was also a " League of Help " for Professional Women, which proved very useful. If no other means of assistance presented itself, needlework could be given, and a little outcome of this was the making at very modest prices of quite wonderful " play costumes " for children that added to the realism of many nursery joys in the fascinating realms that open up when " let's pretend " is the order of the hour. In several instances positions were found in teaching or clerical work, and the fees for training another as a kindergarten nurse were paid.

Another branch was the opening of L'Ouvroir Ste. Anne, which for many weeks found employment at good pay for about thirty workers, who made a number of the garments required by the Croix Rouge Française, as well as remaking costumes no longer fashionable and transforming millinery. This little venture enjoyed the patronage of the French Ambassador, the Duchesse d'Uzes, and other well-known people in its kindly and modest effort.

The Empress Club not only provided vast supplies of comforts in clothing, tobacco, and many little

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luxuries, but through Mrs. James Burn and Lady Lethbridge sent a most useful equipment of portable baths with heating-stoves. The value of these near the trenches was soon amply proved, and few efforts afforded more genuine refreshment and delight. A frankly disagreeable subject, too, was boldly dealt with by these ladies, who took the most expert advice as to disinfecting cabins in which clothing and uniforms could be made free of the horrible insect pests which made many men's lives almost intolerable. Several of these cabins were sent out, and helped most materially, not only to personal comfort but also in reducing typhoid infection.

The Ladies' Army and Navy Club and other smaller clubs threw an equal amount of energy into the task of meeting the new conditions as they rose. Some fussiness was perhaps inevitable in these early days, and all of us met ladies of the type who said, "You must join my committee," and her friend who answered, "My dear, I was quite depending on you to join mine." Happily this was but a transient phase. The real marvel came when women, regarded before the war as mere seekers after their own amusement, or satisfied with the routine work of their own housekeeping, rose to all that was demanded in a great crisis. They proved themselves possessed of real powers of organization, of a capacity for method, order, and the keeping of accounts, able to present as business-like a summary of work accomplished and money laid out as the practised secretary of a big undertaking. A year before the war began, none would have credited the Englishwoman with such faculties. The call came, and she showed that she possessed them in full measure and fine quality.

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# CHAPTER VII

## WOMEN AND THE NEW ARMY

**The call for men — No holding back — Enthusiasm of the girls — Work of women patrols — Bridging of class distinctions — Of billeting, cooking, and the making of uniforms.**

THERE was a stage at which some thought recruiting was not as rapid as it should have been. The War Office was issuing posters more or less striking, and it was advertising considerably in the newspapers. One of the appeals thus made was cast in the form of "Four Questions to the Women of England," and they were:

**1. You have read what the Germans have done in Belgium. Have you thought what they would do if they invaded England?**

**2. Do you realise that the Safety of your Home and Children depends on our getting more men now?**

**3. Do you realise that the one word "Go" from you may send another man to fight for our King and Country?**

**4. When the War is over and your husband or your son is asked, "What did you do in the great War?"—is he to hang his head because you would not let him go?**

There was a concluding exhortation: "Women of



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England, do your duty, send your men to-day to join our glorious Army."

But when the history of the war can be written in the true perspective of all the forces that made for the final victory of which we are all ultimately assured, it will be no ignominious part that the mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts bore in the making of the New Army that under God gave it to us. "My darling boy," said one mother in the early days before the women quite realized what it all meant, "I cry every night over having to send him out." With the finer spirit that afterwards asserted itself, her childless friend, stamping her foot, replied, "And I cry every night because I haven't a son to send!"

The universal call to service brought a wholly new element into the outlook of the average woman. Up to last September we had had families of the aristocratic and landed classes who for generations past had sent their boys into the sea or land Service. These married the sisters of brother officers, or girls that they met in their own particular social circles. In the dockyard and towns the Naval set were more or less exclusive; the garrison towns and India were the interchangeable background of the Army people. The professional classes of the Church, Medicine, or the Law looked upon them as rather apart, with some sense that they were in them, but not of them. Two small castes, of the Navy and the Army, existed, in fact, and even the coming of the Territorial Force did not tend to any greater fusion of the Service and Civilian sections of society. The clergy of the Church of England have, it is true, always given an appreciable number of their sons to the Empire, alike in defensive and administrative posts, but the middle

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classes generally had held aloof from the First and Second lines. The Territorials and the New Army changed all that. A Labour M.P. appeared in the House of Commons in the uniform of an officer; a millionaire M.P. in the uniform of a private. The wife of the millionaire proudly drew her separation allowance.

When the first call to arms came, it would not therefore have been an unaccountable thing if the average woman had somewhat thrown her influence against enlistment. But this war hunted every one out of the accustomed grooves of thought, and in the tremendous magnitude of its issues even the least imaginative saw that it would call us all to sacrifices none had ever before dreamed they would have to face. From the Royal House downwards the example was set. The Prince of Wales volunteered at once for the Field, and it was not the Queen who held him back in those first weeks but Lord Kitchener, who felt that his training was not sufficiently advanced. Meantime Prince Albert was serving on the "Collingwood," and was with the Grand Fleet through the weeks when a vast battle was expected any day, for we had not then realized that the enemy's Naval tactics were going to be those of the "shoot and scoot" order. Princess Arthur of Connaught hastened the christening of her baby that her husband should join the General Staff as soon as possible. Two sons of the Princess Beatrice (Princess Henry of Battenberg) went among the first to the front, one, Prince Maurice, to return no more, and to die a brave man's death leading his company in Belgium.

There had been many engagements between the sons and daughters of well-known families, and weddings

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were hastened on, and the ceremonies fulfilled by special licence in the quietest way in little country churches. The fashionable displays, with bridesmaids, pages, and all their show and glitter, were out of accord with the feelings of the young couples who desired so keenly to set the final seal to their deep affection, even though the bride knew that when the parting with the gallant young officer came it might be final. Yet the girls kept a smiling face, and bade their husbands of a few short hours the most encouraging of God-speeds.

The war had only lasted a few weeks when there came the chastening news of Mons and Charleroi. It had something of the same subduing effect on the national mind as that which was felt in the "Black Week" of Colenso and Magersfontein in the South African War, in December 1899, and moreover, it braced and stimulated in exactly the same way. The younger manhood of the nation heard the call to arms. Round the recruiting centres they thronged, beyond even the powers of the appointed officials and medical examiners to deal with them. The making of a New Army had begun, and thus the whole nation, women as well as men, were in close and direct touch with the stupendous issues that lay before its efficiency and completeness.

Then it was that the women began to know what was to be their part towards the crushing of the foe. They said the word "Go!" in tone so firm and steady that even if a man in his heart wanted an excuse to lag behind, it caused him to stifle it in very shame. The widow with the promising son already beginning to make his way in the profession or business he had chosen looked never so exalted and happy as when she accompanied him to church wearing his very new

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kharki kit. The couple who had waited some years before their happiness was crowned with a boy who had distinguished himself no less in the playing fields than in the examination room were never so overwhelmed with big tidings as when they could tell their friends how Jack had already got a corporal's stripe.

It was the same among the working classes. The mother who, when war seemed unthinkable, was wont to look upon "soldiers" as beings rather inferior to smart young shopmen or electricians, or motor-omnibus drivers or cabinet-makers, who brought their wages home and attended Polytechnic evening classes, accepted it without any surprise when her son came home and announced he should be leaving with such and such a contingent for the training camp next day. In the country the small farmers talked with their wives round the fire, and made plans by which the younger boys could take some of the work that their bigger brothers had been doing when these had to start next week. And there were the instances where the sons had been the chief support of parents ill or incapacitated. "We shan't be let starve," has been said by many as they have bowed their heads and given the last "God bless you!" to the stalwart lad as he has gone to the reinforcement of the County Regiment.

"The girls have gone khaki-mad," has been said at times with some disparagement of the attitude of a section of the young womanhood of the country. That has not been the way that those who know

> The world as we found it;
> Its women and cities and men,

have regarded it. The product of the girls' side of the

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public elementary school has not a wide outlook, nor, save in garrison towns, did she know much of the Army. The girl of other countries, as France, where conscription has ruled for a generation at least, has grown up accustomed to see troops and uniforms everywhere. In our own towns it came as an entire novelty, and it worked upon young impressionable minds. To " walk out " with a soldier in khaki, to have a regimental badge to stick on the front of her jacket and a button to display, was altogether out of the groove that hitherto had been satisfying. There were things regrettable, of course, but happily there have been wise and sympathetic women who could move regarding them. Taken all round, however, English girlhood has come through a new phase of its education very creditably, and bids fair to-day to be much better for it. At least it has taught them to think, and to realize that there are graver issues in the world than their own dress and amusement. Of yet deeper matters more will be said elsewhere.

A certain amount of misdirected attention on the part of young womanhood there was bound to be, especially on the part of the less educated sections. In the vicinity of some of the training camps their presence was frankly a nuisance, diverting the men from their duties. Commanding officers hardly knew how to deal with the problem. But women came to their help in more than one direction, and the National Union of Women Workers formed a " Central Women's Patrol Committee." Mrs. Creighton was in the chair, and associated with her were ladies of experience in all phases of work, as Lady Codrington on behalf of military interests, and Mrs. H. B. Irving with her knowledge of those connected with the stage. Others

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upon it were Mrs. Randall Davidson, wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury; Adeline Duchess of Bedford, Mrs. Bramwell Booth, the Hon. Lady Lyttelton, the Hon. Emily Kinnaird, Mrs. Price Hughes, and Dr. Helen Wilson.

Almost immediately on its formation the Committee received the recognition of the Chief Commissioner of Police, who himself undertook to sign the card of membership entitling the women patrols to all assistance in the discharge of their duties. Every woman enrolled went through a course of training for the work she was expected to do, which covered such duties as:

To patrol on the "beat" assigned to them by the organizer.

To make friends with the girls and gain their confidence.

To warn girls who have been seen speaking to men on duty or behaving unsuitably.

To put the girls in touch with local societies, clubs, or classes.

To observe and note anything bearing on the welfare of the girls and the good conduct of the camp.

To report anything serious to their organizer or patrol leader.

Within a very few weeks of the formation of the committee fifty-nine applications had been received for organizers, and as soon as possible thirty-six were supplied. It was impressed upon them that the great qualities demanded in the work were tact and sympathy, while those only with experience of work among girls were chosen. Many proofs soon came to hand as to the practical usefulness of the enterprise. A Commanding Officer at a large camp wrote to the Committee to tell them of the great improvement that he noted in



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the behaviour of all in its vicinity, and superintendents of police officially reported how cordially they welcomed the collaboration of women in what to them would necessarily be delicate and difficult matters to deal with. Anything in the way of publicity was carefully avoided. No preliminary local meetings took place, but quietly and discreetly a valuable power for good came into being.

For it was not the fault of either men or girls if they had to meet out of doors and walk about in dark and gloomy lanes. There were no places of recreation near many of the camps, and no opportunities of some amusement and refreshment till people's interests were aroused. Then one and another opened their house on certain evenings; even empty houses were sometimes offered. The girls could be invited to come to these, and it was almost pathetic in many instances to realize who they wanted to knit or sew for the soldiers, but were totally in ignorance of even the elements of such handicrafts. Classes of this description proved enormously attractive, and gave quite a new turn to the interest of the girls in the troops. It was also often practicable to arrange musical evenings to which the men also could be invited. In working experience it was found that it was the girls of fourteen to seventeen who were most excitable and most eager to be in the men's company. But that is also an age highly impressionable to influences, good as well as undesirable, and scores of instances could be cited where the gentle counsel of sensible women has been of untold value.

The Young Women's Christian Association and the Girls' Friendly Society also took up this problem most warmly. In the towns the opening of attractive

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clubs proved a great counterblast to the mere promenading of the streets, and wasting time near the camps. At Southampton, through which of course thousands of men were passing weekly, a very successful Union Jack Club for Girls attracted an excellent membership. An underlying principle at these clubs was the idea of impressing on the girls that the war was likely to bring changes vast, and at present in directions only to be surmised. They themselves would have to bear a part in the great reconstitutions that would certainly come about; and it was their plain duty to fit themselves for their share, even as the men were preparing themselves for the task that lay immediately before them. The appeal to their imagination and the right direction of instincts touched by a perverted form of patriotism, which believed that their presence and attention cheered and pleased the soldier, was wisely made, and the full effects of these efforts on the part of sensible and devoted women will appear in the days when peace again rests over Europe.

The bridging of class distinction was wonderful from the first. When the son of the house and the brother of the general servant were both in the ranks, the most self-important of mistresses had to feel that here at least all were standing on common ground. The rapid promotion to non-commissioned and commissioned officers soon brought about some curious reversals of relative positions, as when the junior clerk of a few months before in some big house of business became the captain of his chief's son, only just made a sergeant.

Moreover, the lady who had perhaps put on some airs in her dealings with the local tradespeople came

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to see them less as abstractions when her own boy wrote home and said how he and the grocer's young man and the butcher's nephew were all getting on excellently over signalling for their company, while he himself was doing quite successfully as one of the occasional cooks. For when the young men were all fraternising so well, there had to be recognition sincere and kindly of their mothers and sisters; and all this has made for a better understanding.

Then the billeting moved many out of their little self-centred exclusiveness. It came as an absolute shock to many who had prided themselves on the beautiful order of their homes, their soft carpets, their cosy chairs, their pretty china, and their regular meal hours, to be warned on the 1st or 2nd of August that they would have to take in from four to sixteen men, according to the rooms they had and the number of the family at home. It was little consolation to be told that an allowance in money would be paid, for it was the total upsetting of all the domestic machinery that was the first and most alarming terror.

Let it be explained first, for any who have not had any actual experience of what billeting meant, that the military authorities of any district had the right to demand first a full statement as to the available accommodation in any house. A room then could be requisitioned for the men's meals, and it had to be provided by the owners with a sufficiency of tables and chairs. The owners had to do the cooking and provide the lights and firing needed, as well as hot water. The allowance per man per day was 9d., and the rations officially supplied were: meat 1 lb., bread 1 lb., bacon ¼ lb., tea ⅛ oz., cheese 3 oz., jam ¼ lb., sugar 3 oz., fresh vegetables ½ lb., or dried vegetables ¼ lb., with

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small quantities of salt, pepper, and mustard. The men brought their own blankets, soap, and towels, and the regulations provided only that they should sleep on the floor. Very few householders, however, permitted this, and there was a tremendous demand for inexpensive mattresses and other bedding. For officers the payment was 5s. a day, and it was expected that they should have a bedroom, and as far as possible board with the family.

No one has perhaps given a better account, in the simplest and most straightforward style, of what billeting really meant in a quiet and refined household than Mrs. Cother, wife of a Weymouth clergyman, who related all her experiences for the Parents' Educational Union. Her house happened to have a large room that they had constructed for carpentry and the little lantern lectures they sometimes arranged.

She had been promised that she should have some notice, if possible, but "on Thursday, August 6, I was awake early, and at 5 A.M. I heard the tramping of troops in the road; looking out I saw hundreds of men marching past with their rifles and packs. They were halted in our road in companies, and I knew that this must mean our 'billeting' had come without any warning. The men were Territorials, and they looked for the most part so white and weary that it made one's heart ache to see them. At 8 A.M. an officer came to ask how many men we could take."

Then the real resourcefulness of the good housekeeper showed itself. "At 9.15 our yard was full of hot and tired men; they had spent the night in a train, and had had no food since 6.30 the previous evening. I set a charwoman to work to get the new room ready for them, and turned the men into the

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scullery and pantry to wash, while we put a table and chairs in the yard and laid their breakfasts. They had bully beef, bread and butter, and tea. They were a company of Royal Warwicks, all of them students from Saltley Training College."

Continuing, Mrs. Cother describes how "At noon the men were marched out to dig trenches to defend the road to Portland, and at 6 P.M. they returned hot and exhausted with the unaccustomed labour under a hot sun. They had had no food since 9.30 A.M. They ate the remains of the bully beef for tea, and at 9 P.M. they had a supper of bread and cheese, and turned in, tired out.

"Next morning the men had breakfast at 6.45 A.M., and my servants had to be up very early to have water boiled for their tea. No sugar, meat, or bacon ration had been sent in, and they had only bread and butter for breakfast. The men went out trenching, and when they returned at 1 P.M. I was distressed to find that they had nothing for dinner but bread and cheese; we gave them potatoes and salad, all we could provide at a moment's notice for fifteen men. They took their scanty meal very cheerfully, saying that sometimes in camp they had had only bread and tea. We made them pea soup for supper, as they had so scanty a dinner.

"The next day a beef ration was sent in so old and tough that I decided the meat must be stewed and the bones used for soup. The men told me this was the first hot dinner they had had since July 31st. For supper we made them plum tarts. The men told me they had marching orders for Sunday, and they did not wish to go, for it was the most comfortable billet they had had."

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Before they left, however, the corporal stepped out to say how grateful all had been for her kindness, and Mrs. Cother said she thought it was the women's part in the war to work for those who had given up everything to serve their country.

Her next guests were some men from J Company of the 3rd Battalion Wiltshire Regiment, of which her house was made the headquarters. In her yard the meat rations were cut up every morning, and the vegetables piled in little heaps on the ground for each separate billet, the grocery ration being given out in the evening. In the house sharing their own meals were the Captain and a subaltern, the latter having been reading for the bar.

She goes on to say:

"I supplemented the men's rations by occasional puddings and fruit tarts and soup. When Kitchener's recruits came in, I got each a mattress, pillow, and blanket, for it was hard for men fresh from civil life to sleep on a floor.

"For some weeks the officers' work varied so much from day to day, that we never knew many hours beforehand when meals would be needed for them. On some days a hot breakfast was required at 6.30 A.M., lunch at noon, tea any hour, and dinner at 8 P.M.; on other days the officers had meals with us. The doorbell rang all day, and I seldom passed through the hall without finding a sergeant or a corporal with an urgent message for the Captain."

Mrs. Cother's worst trouble was with servants, some of whom refused the extra work, and some who lost their heads altogether, and were no use in the house. But the whole experience was a phase of domestic conditions such as the housekeeper a month

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before had never foreseen; and the real good nature with which the men were treated everywhere, and the cheerful acquiescence of the women of all classes in the new conditions involved, contributes to a total of no little moment in the co-operation of all towards the common purpose.

As the winter drew on, whole districts found every house and every room it could give requisitioned for men, sometimes at first sight drawn from occupations that would not tend to the amenities of a middle-class household. Yet how rarely did any one try to shirk this obligation placed on them by the Defence of the Realm Act. On the contrary, the general effort was to make the men as comfortable as possible, and the weeks that they spent in private houses gave many families a new and personal interest they would not otherwise have had in the deeds of a battery, a regiment, or a company.

Schoolrooms and parish halls were devoted to the men after their day's labours. The ladies would undertake to provide light and fuel, and very often some tea or cocoa. Chairs, tables, and a piano if possible, would be collected from one and another, others would be asked to send books, magazines, and papers, and thus countless little centres of rest and recreation sprang up in the length and breadth of the land. It is help that will never be expressed in columns of statistics, but in the long wet evenings of a specially rainy late autumn women quietly made the conditions of training and the inevitable hardships of camp enormously better.

When socks and gloves and mittens ran short among the men of a company, it was to his mother and sisters that the newly gazetted subaltern turned to make

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and collect some help in this form. "I've got the best lot of fellows that have joined, keen as mustard," or something to that effect was the irresistible plea, and in a very few days came the parcels that brought real comfort.

There were camps at which there was real difficulty in getting any clothes washed for the men. A little committee of ladies would then be formed; one of them would lend her back kitchen with its boiler, another knew the women who would be glad of the laundry work, a third had a pony and cart and would call on settled days for the mud-stiffened garments and bring back those that had been washed. In scores of such practical and helpful ways women bore their useful part.

Then, again, in the neighbourhood of some of the camps women rendered practical service in another form by holding classes in elementary cookery for the men. Especially were the teachers of domestic economy under the Sussex County Council helpful in this direction. Miss M. Foster conducted classes of the kind within easy reach of the camp on the Downs above Shoreham, and found that far more men volunteered to join them than she could possibly accommodate. She showed them how to turn their rations to the best account, and all who attended tried to profit by the instruction. Moreover, none shirked the uninteresting cleansing and scullery work, and her own hope, as well as that of others who assisted in a similarly useful work, is that the men may derive the best results from the food supplied for them.

The National Union of Women Workers drew useful attention also to the bad management of the rations in some of the camps. Both bread and meat were issued in an unintelligent manner, which resulted in a terrible

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waste of the first, so much so that it proved worth collecting afterwards to be sold to farmers for feeding pigs. Tons of bones from which the meat had been hastily and carelessly cut for stewing were simply buried, instead of being utilized to provide soup that would have been welcome in the evening before bed-time, as the interval from 5 o'clock, which was the hour of the latest regular meal, until the next morning's breakfast was a long one, and was felt badly by men accustomed in civil life to a satisfying supper after their day's work. The criticism had useful effect, as the catering and food generally became much better in these later days of the new army's training.

Let it not be forgotten, moreover, what the New Army owes to women's industry. The moment of mobilization threw an enormous strain upon the Army Clothing Factory, where every inch of space on which a machine could stand was utilized, and overtime and double shifts were immediately called for. As many women as could be taken in there were engaged, and the work of making the tunics and other parts of the uniforms proceeded as fast as busy fingers earning extra money could turn them out, and as fast as the khaki could be delivered. It is skilled work. Not every machinist who could turn out a coat and skirt costume could take it, though in the urgency of the situation some of these could do tacking, button-sewing, and other details.

In its necessity, the Factory had to call for outside contracts for uniforms, and every wholesale tailor was asked what he could provide. Even sub-contracting was permitted, provided that the principal party made himself responsible that payments would conform to the Fair Wages Act.

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Next, Leeds with its 36,000 or so of tailoresses entered the field, and here before long a curious situation arose. The higher class workers, engaged previous to the autumn of the war on what is known as the "bespoke" trade, which it may be explained means the making up of garments to measure for the individual customers of the smaller tailors' shops, found that their work was falling off, and that the deft machinists, accustomed to the requirements of the ready-made clothing trade, were earning considerably more money. Herein might have lain the possibilities of a serious labour crisis, and there was a trade union quite inclined to foster it fully. But the general good sense of these Leeds tailoresses realized that the country needed their help in its degree as much as that of the men themselves in the fighting line. Any peril of a big strike passed over, and at the busy city now are thousands of women who wear a nicely turned out brooch with the Crown above a scroll of red, white, and blue enamel, on which are the words, "On His Majesty's Work." By a happy inspiration of the designer the scroll takes the form of "S," suggestive of "Service." This was the Christmas gift of some of the largest firms of manufacturing clothiers to all their regular staff of women workers, who had laboured so loyally to turn out the uniforms required by the men in training, and to replace those out-worn at the front.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### HOW THE WOUNDED ARE BROUGHT HOME

**A definite system—The Clearing Hospital and its women nurses—The ambulance train—Emergency wards at the quayside—Southampton's splendid system.**

NEVER before has there been so perfect and systematic a plan from the dressing station, at such cover as may be found in the rear of the fighting-line, till the convalescent soldier is recuperating among his own kith and kin, or is enjoying some such hospitality as a well-appointed home on the south coast or a health-giving watering-place can afford him. Each one has gone through the Clearing Hospital, which, roughly speaking, is generally within sound of guns, though outside their range. The men are brought in with all sorts of injuries. A doctor describing one such hospital speaks of the large proportion of head and brain injuries to be dealt with, as well as of amputations. "We give up," he said, "no head-case that is not actually moribund, though our labours are rarely rewarded by success. One unsatisfactory feature of Clearing Hospital work is due to the necessity of evacuating cases as soon as possible, consequently one can only guess as to their ultimate course. . . . On paper, a clearing hospital has seven medical officers



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attached and accommodates 200 patients—no beds. At the present time we have eleven medical officers, a dentist, a bacteriologist, a variable number of Red Cross dressers, and five Sisters, the latter when our position is considered reasonably safe, though they much resent the implied objection to risks."

Even this somewhat qualified privilege is a great advance on any position that women have hitherto been permitted as to nearness to the firing line. In all past wars the base hospital has been the closest approach permitted to them. Hence the account given by Sister Kiddle, who shared with three other nurses of the Army Reserve the distinction of being mentioned in General French's Dispatch of February, is of more than passing interest. She was with Sisters Fraser, Shackleton, and Ames, and she wrote to the Matron of Guy's Hospital, her old training school, as follows :

" We have quite settled down to our new work, and like it immensely, though, of course, we have a great many more difficulties to contend with than at our Versailles Palace. This place was once a boys' day school, and before we came had been used for billeting troops, and consequently was very dirty. In fact the mud had to be scraped from the floors with spades, and after several scrubbings they are beginning to look a little more respectable. We can take in over 400, but as we only keep our patients about twelve hours unless they are too bad to go on, we are not always full up.

" This place is well arranged and works excellently. Our greatest difficulty is the water ; every drop has to be fetched from the town. We have to wash one patient after another in the same water until it makes

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one feel quite ill. The drainage is, of course, hopeless; everything has to be carried quite a distance, so the poor orderlies have a great deal to do. The heating is very primitive; in fact, a more feeble invention I never saw. We are all longing to enjoy a real good English fire, like the one in the Clinicals' Room. The lighting might be worse, although it is pretty bad—oil lamps; which love to remind you of their existence by pouring forth a volume of smoke. There is quite a good theatre, not often empty.

"The three floors of the building are arranged for acute or minor cases, receiving rooms, etc. The wards for minor cases have only stretchers, and resemble huge rag-shops when the patients are tucked away. The acute wards are honoured with beds, most of which, with the bedding, were presented by the Red Cross Society. We are thankful for them, in spite of the varied appearance they present: red blankets or brown instead of counterpanes, some beds with top sheets, others with none. The windows are dirty, floors dirty, and an endless amount of dirt seems to honour us, but we are too busy to trouble with such details.

"The approach to our hospital is beyond description —mud!! They have tried to improve it, but the soil is too soft and the ambulance waggons so heavy.

"I cannot tell you about the patients: they are just too pathetic for words, and as we have only those who are too bad to be sent further, it would be difficult to find anything cheerful to tell, except they are just splendid bricks!

"The town is very quaint, with houses that remind one of nursery days, built of red brick with little green windows. They are beautifully clean outside, but, as Tommies are billeted in them everywhere, the

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insides cannot be as spotless as before. The roads and pavements are all cobbles, not at all comfy to walk on, and the men must find them awful for marching. Most of the inhabitants have gone, and the whole place is given over to troops, the roads lined with motor waggons of all kinds ready to be off at a moment's notice. The Tommies sit on the roadside cooking their meals, which really look appetising, and stand in the road washing in buckets or old petrol tins.

"I told you of the old ladies who looked after our billet; well, they have gone to Paris, as they were able to get work there. Now some refugee nuns from Ypres are looking after us. It is a most quaint arrangement. They are allowed food and a home in return for their services. One morning at 6 A.M. eight little black-robed figures arrived. We thought that we should shock them dreadfully, and that they would be very prim and proper, but they are perfectly sweet. They came from a beautiful convent which was shelled by the Germans, and find the life very different here, cleaning and cooking. In the convent they used to teach little children."

From a nurse attached to No. 5 Clearing Hospital comes also a glimpse of the real hardships under which many of these splendid women had to do no small part of their work. When she was ordered to go from the outskirts of Paris with four others to Boulogne they were warned that the main line was blocked; they decided to go by way of Rouen, where they arrived hungry, tired, and with no kit. Thanks to the British Train Ambulance men, a supper was got for them, and they were put on a sleeping car train, with permission to remain in it till it returned—an arrangement which compelled the ladies to walk

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about the station for a full hour before hotels or buffets were opened. Then they went on to the Clearing Hospital, in which the patients were kept about four days.

"The food and discomforts of Boulogne were the worst we had so far experienced," wrote this nurse; but once at her work she soon became so intensely interested over it that she never wished to be in a General Hospital again.

The daily programme was something on these lines—"Arrival of convoy; all orderlies assemble; stretcher cases and badly wounded 'sitters' come to us at once; emergencies seen at once; all fed and allowed to sleep; then dressed, and we try to wash at least face, hands, and feet, and change socks. Sometimes so many come in and go out even under four hours that we cannot do more. When they stay a night, we can at least get in a full wash, clean shirts, and exchange old clothes. We have amputations two or three days, and generally have a few bad cases left when the rest of the convoy goes off. One day we had three different convoys in and out, and kept a fourth for the night. In such case we have to hop around smartly."

Such is some of the work that scores of our best nurses have been doing for months past. Only the officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps have seen it; there has been no glamour, no outside praise. There have been the thanks of men whose sufferings have been eased, and that has meant much. But who shall ever say how often in the rare interval of rest such women have not truly heard the words, "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto ME."

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Then, there is the hospital train that takes the men from the Clearing Hospital to the Base or General Hospital. As to its part in the scheme, a medical officer describes it as "an admirably fitted unit; it enables one to remove with comparative safety to a better part of the world, cases which would in civil life be rigidly confined to the same bed for weeks or months. It is when the train fails to come up regularly, as may occur after a change of position, that we, in the clearing hospitals, become seriously over-worked. The vast majority of our cases can be transferred to the train after being redressed, though some may remain with us for a week or even longer."

Of the nursing work on these trains, Sister Beardshaw (of Guy's Hospital) gives a vivid little sketch, which appeared in the Hospital Magazine:

"Our train, No. 12, was at Rouen; we were told to join it next day. Spent our time seeing various hospitals and meeting Guy's people. We put up at an old hotel, and were well waited upon by some little French girls. They told us that now the women and girls in Boulogne have to work very hard. The place is so full. The fish-market going hard. Quantities of transport goods on the quay. It brought home to me the 'bigness' of the war. I love that side of it, it is all so wonderful—the management of all details. We arrived at Rouen to hear our train was lost,—it was three miles out of the town,—so we eventually joined in the afternoon.

"It was nice to see Rouen again. The place was leading a much more normal life than when we saw it in August. Ours is known as the 'Khaki Train'—a Kitchener's Train, it is half Gt. Eastern and half L.N.W. There are 220 beds, stretcher ones, two



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layers. In between each carriage is a little department, a place for plates, mugs, dressings, etc. The officers' and sisters' part is at one end with their kitchen. Dispensary in the middle. Patients' kitchen and orderlies' quarters at the other end. There are three medical officers, one army sister in charge of wards A and B and the general run of all our work. I have C, D, and E wards, and Miss Wilson has F, G, H; a 'London' nurse has the three others. The army sister is an old Guy's, so I think we shall be very happy together. There are forty-five orderlies.

"The paint of the train is white, bed-frames dark red, curtains green, and blankets dark brown, so the general effect is very pretty. It is kept most beautifully clean, and the orderlies are very proud of their train—the best on the line, they say. We go up and down to the clearing station, so I am greatly looking forward to seeing Sisters Kiddle and Ames; I do hope they will not be moved before we get there. We often take convalescent patients about, often to Havre. Have been between Havre and Rouen twice these last few days."

At Boulogne and Havre were quayside hospitals having both an emergency ward and a department for the treatment of casualties. In this latter new dressings, displaced by the jolting of the train or necessary owing to the discharge of wounds, were attended to, while any sudden complications that might have arisen could also be considered. Supplemental to these, and directed by women, were the free buffets provided by the British Red Cross Society, where soup, tea, cocoa, cigarettes, and a host of small comforts were thoughtfully provided.

Thus there has been no stage of the journey from

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the fighting line to the French coast left uncovered. From within sound of the guns there were the gentle ministrations of the skilled nurse assisting in all that the physician and surgeon could do. Before embarking on the ship there were kindly women ready to post a letter to the wife or mother or sweetheart at home, which would convey the welcome tidings that a gallant fellow was well on his way to them; to give a little packet of fruit or cake or something that would be welcome on the sea journey; or to render any of those little services, even to supplying a boot-lace where needed, that would cheer and encourage and bid a tired man feel that he was cared for.

Since the wounded began to be sent home, a service of carrier ships has been steadily maintained to cross from Havre or Boulogne. Let the distinction between these and the hospital ships be duly noted. The latter belong to the Navy, and are in attendance on the Grand Fleet or other squadrons, and in the possibilities of things that had to be considered, wounded might have to wait days even before they could be sent home. In the fighting in the Dardanelles, for instance, the wounded would have to remain on the hospital ship for ten days or so before they could reach Haslar or either of the naval hospitals. Among the carrier ships is the "Asturias," which, as will be remembered, was the objective of the enemy's torpedo craft in defiance of every convention of civilized warfare. What the work is like on these ships, as far as their nursing staff is concerned, is shown by a nurse who served on her for a long period, who in mid-January wrote:

"Once again we are in Southampton with another large load of patients. These we are now bringing

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back are not so badly wounded as those in the earlier part of the war.

"It is a short journey we make now (about five return journeys in the fourteen days), but on the other side we wait a day or so, and therefore have some of the patients two or three days. In these we see a great improvement.

"Some require operation. The other day we had a strangulated hernia. One poor lad of twenty had been lying in a barn for five days, shot in the leg. It was pathetic to see him trying to make us believe it was better than it had been during the five days when he was told it must come off. It was gangrenous, and had to be amputated above the knee. However, on hearing that he would have an anæsthetic and not feel the operation, he became quite cheerful.

"Another patient was a schoolboy of seventeen. He joined a Territorial Regiment and went out four months ago. Although he had lost a finger on his right hand and had a gunshot wound in the right thigh, he wants to go out again. When the war is over he is going back to school! In the ward where I am working we are 3 sisters and 4 orderlies with 53 patients, so there is always enough to do.

"On Christmas morning a train-load of patients came in from the trenches. Of course they were 'caked' with mud, but after a sleep and a wash they cheered up, and quite enjoyed the remainder of the day. In the morning carols were sung in every ward by the 'choir,' and there were two concerts in the evening.

"At 6 A.M. Boxing Day we sailed for England. One evening we had a Guy's tea-party in our cabin. The decorations were reminiscent of Christmas in the

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hospital, including a 'Charity' horse-shoe and a white satin bow with the Guy's crest and motto, which came from the Sister's Christmas dinner-table, 1913.

"The weather during the last six weeks has been trying to most of us, though we consider ourselves hardened sailors. On really rough days 'doing dressings' is somewhat strenuous work, for bowls of swabs and gauze have a knack of careering down the ward at a critical moment."

Most of the nurses proved remarkably good sailors, and only in a very few instances did they have to ask to be put to shore instead of ship duty. Several of the nurses supplied by the London Hospital were assigned work on the transports, and they wrote home enthusiastically as to the general conditions. They faced, too, their serious dangers; for, more often than has generally been told, the enemy submarines have been nearer than was to be desired. There was no lack of work on the ships, for when the vessels had turned round to come back to the French coast, the nurses found their time fully occupied in preparing the cots, providing the dressings, and making ready for those who, they knew, would be waiting for them.

It has been throughout the war a privilege accorded by the War Office to very few to be allowed to see the home-coming of the wounded at Southampton. The reason, of course, is the obvious one that the presence of strangers, no matter how kindly intentioned, would have been a hindrance to the swift and methodical plan by which the sufferers were transferred to the Red Cross trains in waiting for them. But even in the earlier days of the war, when things had barely had time to get into smooth running order, all the arrangements were being carried through in the most admirable

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working system. There is no finer chapter in the organization of the war than that which some day will be told, perhaps in full detail, how the work went on day after day, quietly, nay almost secretly, through autumn, winter, and spring, down at Berth 23 of the vast docks at Southampton.

This particular berth was entirely given over to the reception of the wounded. One morning's work there was very like that of another, and the only variations in the routine were whether one of the "carrier" ships or two came in, or whether they brought full tale or few of the brave men who had been stricken or wounded sorely in France and Belgium.

Six ships, it may be said, are in the regular service. The larger vessels are the magnificent "Asturias" of the Royal Mail Company, the new and well-planned "Oxfordshire" of the Bibby Line, and the popular "Carisbrooke Castle" of the Union Castle Fleet. Some months ago, when the possibilities of a sudden call for war-readiness were realized, all the smaller services on the coast and the channel were inspected, and the report sent in favoured the "St. Patrick," "St. Andrew," and "St. David" of the Great Western route to Fishguard as best adaptable to hospital requirements.

It was the "St. Patrick," with the Red Cross at her mainmast, and the same emblem of mercy on the broad green band painted round her hull, that came to her moorings about daylight on a certain glorious late autumnal morning. Disembarkation begins at 9 o'clock, but before that preparations had to be made. There was the ominous getting out of the stretchers by the khaki-clad orderlies, and the ranging up beside the gangway of the light and ingenious

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M'Cormack carriers, which have two light rubber-tyred wheels, and a drop-bar back and front, to keep them stationary as the stretchers are placed upon them.

Presently came down Surgeon-General Donovan, C.B., of long experience in South Africa, who is at the head of the Disembarkation Staff at Southampton, and with him was Captain Henderson, R.A.M.C. They are assisted by Major Anderson, R.A.M.C., who for the last four years has been here in connection with the general medical duties of trooping.

No docks in the kingdom are better adapted for the grave work that is daily carried on there. The ships are brought alongside; there is a huge shed, light, capacious, affording ample space for all requirements, a clean boarded floor throughout, while on the opposite side one train after another draws up as required, the patients being under cover from ship's side to railway carriage.

Very perfect indeed were all these preliminaries. Notification used to be sent to the Surgeon-General's office the day before—how many officers and men each ship would bring, and their destination on arrival. On the "St. Patrick," for example, were a considerable number for York and Sheffield. Hence, as this would be the longest journey, it was a North-Western train that was to leave first. A few words of consultation with Major O'Grady, R.A.M.C., who was in command medically of the ship, and the order was given to begin the transfer.

"Walking cases, single file this way," said a non-commissioned officer, and then began a long procession of those with the less serious injuries to head or arms or hands. Many were limping, some were using

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crutches or heavy sticks, others were supported by the orderlies. Very cheery were most of them, however, though in many cases there was a strained far-off look about the eyes that told with its own eloquent significance the anxious watches for an enemy entrenched and often invisible.

Most of the interior fittings formerly in the ship had been removed, though it was possible to trace what had been first and second saloons. Cots were placed in close rows, every little niche or alcove that could be made to hold one had been utilized, and the matron, Miss Wohlmann of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service, pointed out the dispensary, the stores of medical comforts, and the general arrangements.

With strength and tenderness the orderlies transferred the worst cases to the stretchers. Now and again one of the nurses, of whom there were three besides the matron, directed the movement of some specially difficult case, which was conveyed to the lift and raised to the deck. The lift has proved an addition of incalculable value on all the ships, saving pain and jolting up gangways to the sufferers, and an immensity of labour to the orderlies. All was effected swiftly, and in that orderly quiet which means that all know their duties. Indeed, the quiet due to the rubber-covered flooring, which deadened all footsteps, and the absence of spoken commands were not the least notable features in the fulfilment of the work of mercy. There were 370 cases on board, including 43 officers, and soon after eleven o'clock the "St. Patrick" was moving away cleared.

It is permissible to anticipate here, and to speak of the stately incoming of the "Carisbrooke Castle," which followed to the same mooring with something

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over 500 officers and men. Her nursing staff, under Miss Stronach of Queen Alexandra's Service, numbers twelve, including another Army Sister, for the rule was laid down that two at least of these highly skilled ladies shall be on each of the larger carrier ships. For the rest, they are drawn from the Territorial Nursing Service and the Army Nursing Reserve.

Again there were the closely ranged cots, all of which are on the swinging principle, though they can be made stationary at once if desired. There were five wards in all, one on the upper deck being given over for the officers, while some of the cabins could be utilized for the convalescent or slighter cases. On both ships a red label attached to the bed-jacket of officer or man told its own grimly significant message. It indicated a specially grave injury, and that the sufferer was unable to bear a long railway journey, Netley being the destination.

Had it been one's mission it would almost have been possible to construct a consecutive narrative of the fighting from the stories that could have been told on the "Carisbrooke." For here were two of the 9th Lancers who took part in the magnificent charge that will ever live in history, and elsewhere were men who were in the fighting but a few days before, while one airman was also injured. All had been collected at Boulogne to be conveyed to England.

Meantime was proceeding the work of transferring the wounded to the trains. In some slight details the train prepared by one company may differ from that of another, and those going north—for men have to be taken as far as Aberdeen or Glasgow at intervals—are rather more completely equipped as regards their kitchens than those running on the southern systems.

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The Army Medical Department specified what the general requirements would be, and the companies only entered into rivalry to make their own train as perfect for its purpose as it could be.

There are on all the trains carriages fitted with upper and lower sleeping berths for the cot cases. Again to be noted were the tenderness and care with which every man was placed in his berth, and the completeness of the provision for his comfort on his journey. The companies supply their own cooks, accustomed to the work of dining-cars, and ample supplies of beef-tea, arrow-root, milk, tea, biscuits and cold meats are always carried.

Each train, too, has its medical officer, and non-commissioned officer and two nurses. Ten fully qualified ladies have had quarters assigned to them at Netley; but when it is a busy day, or if these have taken long journeys and have not returned, a nursing institution of high repute in Southampton can furnish as many more as may be wanted.

A South-Western train took away a number to the hospital at Tidworth, and was followed by that from the Great Western which was going to Cheltenham. For those able to sit up, or needing merely a leg rest, roomy saloon carriages are provided, and it is no unusual thing for the men to say they wish they were going much farther, for they had never had such comfortable journeys in their lives.

To be mentioned, too, is the train composed of ambulance carriages belonging to the War Department. These can be run as a complete train or slipped for attachment to an ordinary train. Their internal fittings differ in one important detail from those of the railway companies, inasmuch as the berths can be

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lifted out and conveyed to the ship for the conveyance of any specially grave cases without a second transfer.

Even yet it is impossible to give figures as to the numbers of wounded men who have passed through this centre alike of reception and distribution. Not until the war is over and the last ship has cleared of her injured men will this information be available in its terrible magnitude. But Southampton can claim one great distinction besides the appalling total, and that will be in regard to the extraordinarily small number of deaths that occurred during the transfer from ship to train. Out of the first 18,000 brought home only one expired there. His injuries were very bad, and the medical staff were consulting as to whether so grave a case should not be sent to Netley when death suddenly occurred through an unsuspected heart trouble. All the Orderly Staff at the docks were Territorials, and they numbered 120. Every one who has seen their work is impressed by the efficiency, the quiet promptitude, and the real gentleness and care they brought to bear upon the removal of the sufferers.

In many little ways, too, over and beyond official regulations, there is evidence how the men are receiving exactly that attention that the nation wishes them to have after their splendid services. Clothing is, of course, a paramount necessity. Only the nurses and orderlies can tell the real state of need in which the men are often brought in. Sometimes their uniform is in rags, or it has been found necessary to cut great portions of it away to render first-aid. At other times between mud and gore it is fit only to cast aside.

Southampton and the County of Hants rose well

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to these needs. Mrs. Anderson, wife of Major Anderson, with a matron and nurses, is directing a small hospital within the dock gates for the casualties that occur in connection with embarkations or other official labour, and in association with this there is a splendid department for Red Cross supplies. Thanks to the generosity of one and another in gifts of garments and comforts and money, many thousands of useful items, as dressing-gowns, pyjamas, shirts, cardigans, overcoats, socks, ward slippers, and kit bags have been collected for all demands, and the matron of each ship as it comes in requisitions what she finds is needed. Hence every man goes to the trains properly provided for and comfortably attired.

Nor should the kindly thought of a number of the townspeople be overlooked. They maintained a little fund to supply every man on his arrival with cigarettes, and the gentleman who distributed these was always ready to despatch letters or postcards that it was desired to send away at once.

The last train would generally be made up and sent away by three o'clock. The carrier ships swung out to mid-stream under the shadow of Netley, whose great blocks early in the year were full, and were supplemented by the huts of the British Red Cross Society.

Netley always has its own special appeal to every woman. Does it not stand as the brick-and-stone embodiment of all that the genius of Florence Nightingale demanded for a Military Hospital? Here, too, the modern system of military nursing took shape under a succession of three women of rare character and personality in Mrs. Shaw Stewart, who had been Miss Nightingale's very right hand at Scutari; in Mrs.

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Deeble, the pioneer of nursing by women actually in the field in savage countries; and in Miss Helen Norman, whose fine traditions are fully maintained to-day by the magnificently efficient sisters and nurses of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service.

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# CHAPTER IX

## THE BELGIAN REFUGEES

**Lady Lugard's thought for the women and children—Utilizing the Ulster organization—First warnings—Rapid preparations—Early arrivals — An increasing rush — Private hospitality—Questions of employment.**

THERE is no chapter more noble in the whole chronicle of women's work in the war than that which covers the care of the Belgian Refugees. In all the strange possibilities that surged through minds, whether calm and confident, whether anxious and disturbed, in the first week of the war, none perhaps foresaw in the least the vast problems that would arise when the invaders swept across the frontier and stood before the fortress of Liège. None dreamed of the claims that would be made upon the hospitality of these shores, for in those early days we had not realized that ours would be the duty, the privilege rather, of shielding and befriending the victims of the most ruthless injustice that even the stained pages of pitiless ambition can show. It was in those days that Mr. Asquith, in his splendid tribute to the little country's honour and courage, her Army and her King, said: "The Belgians have won for themselves this immortal glory which belongs to a people who prefer freedom to ease, to security, even



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to life itself. We are proud of their alliance and their friendship. We salute them with respect and with honour. We assure them to-day in the name of the United Kingdom and the whole Empire that they may count to the end on our whole-hearted and unfailing support."

It has not perhaps been realized as fully as it will be in the days to come that, as far as rendering that support to the individual man, woman, or child, it was a woman's genius that crystallized what might have been merely nebulous sympathy into practical aid. She who wrought this miracle is Lady Lugard —formerly a great journalist, as capable of telling the facts about Kanaka labour in Queensland as of describing the wonderful resources of the Klondyke; as much at home in the administration of a backward West African State with her husband in Nigeria as when addressing the Royal Geographical Society on some abstruse matter of tribal delimitations. Fortunately the Society of Arts induced her to read a paper on the subject of the War Refugees Committee, and the way in which she utilized existing machinery gives a new sidelight upon the completeness with which the Ulster Council had made its preparations in case of civil war in Ireland.

"For the War Relief Committee," said Lady Lugard, "is the lineal descendant of the Ulster Council," and this is how it came to be so. She explained:

"Like most Irish Protestants I was aware that, in view of coming contingencies, arrangements had been made for the removal of many thousands of women and children from the area which was likely to become a theatre of war. These arrangements had been made with great thoroughness. Registration and all other

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necessary forms had been prepared, transport had been organized, and safe homes had been secured in England. The outbreak of European war mercifully averted the misfortune of war in Ireland, and when the news of the first atrocities came through from Belgium they suggested the idea, 'Why not use the Ulster organization to get the Belgian women and children out, if possible, from under the German guns?'

"At that time we had, of course, no conception of the development which the refugee movement was ultimately to take. The thought in my mind was mainly of women and children. I telegraphed to Captain Craig to ask whether, if such a scheme proved feasible, he would let me have the use of the Ulster organization. He telegraphed back immediately that everything they had was at my disposal for such a purpose. He sent me all their registration forms—forms which we are to-day using at the War Refugees Committee—and put me immediately in touch with people who had the necessary information. In twenty-four hours I had the embryo of an organization in my hands."

But a point that even at this stage could not be overlooked was that the Belgians are in religion Romanists, and it would be necessary to invoke the approval of Cardinal Bourne for any effort on their behalf. This was promptly assured, and Monsignor Bidwell was one of the first to collaborate in the preliminaries. Next Sir Edward Grey on behalf of the Foreign Office, Count de Lalaing the Belgian Minister, and the Local Government Board all gratefully welcomed whatever practical steps might be taken. Part of Liège, it may be recalled, was occupied on August 8, and in a rising wave of horrors followed the German

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captures of Namur, Brussels, Termonde, with their control of Dinant-sur-Meuse, Alost, and Aerschott. The civilian population were flying in terror, seeking such places as were held by their own troops, and eventually making in large numbers for the Dutch frontiers.

The Relief Committee had not even assumed a definite form when on August 22 came the information that such was the state of wretchedness of whole families that the Admiralty proposed to send a transport to one of the coast towns and bring a number over to this country. The number might be anything from 100 to 1000, and there was no sort of provision made for them, though within forty-eight hours the unhappy people might well be upon our shores. To add to the difficulty the intervening day—August 23—was a Sunday.

Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, Lord Hugh Cecil, Mr. H. E. Morgan, and Lord Gladstone came to the help of Lady Lugard, and the vacant buildings intended for the General Accident, Fire, and Life Assurance Corporation were placed by its General Manager, Mr. F. Norie Miller, at their disposal. On the Monday when the first workers took possession they had neither chairs nor tables, paper nor ink, yet before the day was out 1000 letters in reply to an appeal sent out late on Sunday night to the great morning papers had poured in! This number was doubled the next day, and increased all the week until the 28th, when it reached the number of 5000, while 1200 callers were dealt with.

But meantime the unhappy people were beginning to arrive. The first house to be utilized was one retained in St. George's Road, South Belgravia, by the India Office for the use of the King's Indian Orderly



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Officers, who come over each season for a period of Court duty; next the Borough Council of Camberwell, which had equipped the Dulwich Baths as a hospital, offered help; while Battersea also could provide useful accommodation. Let Lady Lugard herself tell the story of her first arrivals:—

"It was on Wednesday evening (August 26), at about half-past seven o'clock, as we were separating after a heavy day's work, that a telegram was brought in saying, 'One thousand refugees arriving Folkestone to-night. Can you take 500 in London to-morrow?' The moment had come. We had provided with the greatest difficulty for 250. To provide suddenly for 500 more seemed at first sight impossible. But to give you one instance of the early work I will describe how it was done.

"Among the offers which had been made to us was one from the Army and Navy Stores, proposing to lend us an empty shirt factory conveniently situated just opposite Victoria Station. It was in a perfectly sanitary condition, clean, with gas, light, and water laid on, but stark empty. At eight o'clock on Wednesday evening we accepted the offer. Mrs. Walter Cave took direction in this particular act of energy, and I believe she was up all that night. The Army and Navy Stores let us have beds at cost price. The chairman of the Rowton Houses lent us crockery and linen. Willing help came from every side, and the result was achieved that before three on the following afternoon the shirt factory had been converted into a hostel, where 250 beds were made up with clean sheets and pillow-cases, a kitchen was arranged downstairs with eight cooking-stoves, dining-tables were ready laid, and a hot dinner for several hundred people awaited

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the arrival of the refugees. Our first batch of 250 arrived there that afternoon. We disposed of the others in different places, and from that day, though we continued to receive refugees in London at the rate of several hundreds per day, and were often at our wits' end what to do, not one who reached our hands was ever left without food and lodging."

Daily the work increased. On September 5 the Burgomaster of Malines telegraphed that 1000 homeless victims were on their way to hospitable England; a day or so later the Military Governor of Antwerp intimated that he must send away as many as possible of the civil population. On September 9 it was stated in the House of Commons that the British Government had offered to Belgium to receive all that it was desired to send to safety, and that in accepting, the Belgian Government had laid it down that their subjects coming over to England should comply with the three following conditions:

(1) They should have lost their homes owing to the war.
(2) They should be of good character.
(3) They should be medically examined.

The great strain came after the fall of Ostend. In one week alone 26,000 were landed at Folkestone. Among them were wounded men from the firing line, as well as elderly men who had seen the first fierce fury of the invasion. There were ghastly tales told of the horrors inflicted on women, old as well as young; there were men who had actually been compelled to assist in burying neighbours who were not even dead. At Folkestone, where Mr. Basil Williams volunteered any services he could render to the Local Government

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Board, a staff of 150 ladies and gentlemen were constantly in attendance with food, clothing, and first aid appliances, and night and day the work went on.

Every day was improving the system of the Relief Committee. Mr. Henry Campbell, of the London General Omnibus Company, organized an excellent method of meeting and conveying the arrivals to their destination, which by this time had grown to include the Alexandra Palace, the Edmonton Refuge, the St. Giles' Home, Earl's Court Exhibition buildings, various casual departments of the London Unions, while even suburban parish halls were utilized. In regard to nuns and lonely women, Miss Streeter and the Catholic Women's League assumed responsibility for about 6000 refugees, while the Misses Rothschild also dealt with a very large number. The Jewish community in London undertook the care of those of their own faith, who numbered, it is estimated, about 6000. These were distributed among the Poland Street Workhouse, the Jewish Shelter in Leman Street, and the Manchester Hotel in Aldersgate Street, a large house which had been closed for several months previously.

By the middle of September the War Relief Committee and the Local Government Board were working together in most harmonious accord. This latter Department delegated its own part of the task of feeding and housing the refugees to the Metropolitan Asylums Board, and something of the mass of work that perforce fell upon them may be judged from the fact that between September 10 and November 28 45,532 people had to be assisted.

The fall of Antwerp threw great pressure upon the Alexandra Palace and Earl's Court, which were then requisitioned. It is difficult to realize the state of

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utter destitution in which these poor folk arrived. Not only had they to be equipped with clothing and boots—a department for which Lady Emmott assumed responsibility, using a huge house in Eccleston Square as the depôt whence nearly 500,000 garments were given out—but such trifles as needles and bootlaces, hairpins and sewing cotton, had to be found for them. Only women would have thought of these details, and infinitely pathetic was their gratitude for rosaries, impressing those who gave them with a sense of their simple faith. "They seemed," said Lady Lugard in her paper, "themselves to realize, in the tragic extremity of their distress, that they had lost everything except their God, and I cannot easily convey the touching fervour of the prayers in the chapels of the refugees at which I once or twice incidentally assisted. Piety, courage, extraordinary fortitude, and overflowing heartfelt gratitude for all that was being done for them in England were the principal characteristics that enlisted our sympathy and admiration for our guests."

But, of course, they were not all of the poorer class who reached this country, and there were many of the professional and higher commercial ranks. Private people in the towns and the countryside were lavish in their offers of hospitality. They were willing to receive a married couple, a mother and her children, a couple of boys or girls as the case might be, and herein was a phase of the work that called for the utmost tact and discernment. Of course now and again the square pegs got into the round holes. The middle-class Belgian, whether man or woman, is not the most adaptable of persons. They did not always understand our domestic arrangements; our food was not

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invariably to their liking, but the marvel is that all was done with so little friction. Never have English women acted as hostesses to utter strangers with a finer sense of wishing to put them at their ease and to make them comfortable. With refugees of all classes arriving after the fall of Antwerp at the rate of 2000 a day for several days, some errors as to location were inevitable, but those who saw the actual work and realized the tremendous difficulties that were overcome are the last to offer cavilling criticism.

Some of the advice officially tendered to Belgians coming to England is rather interesting. Every one was exhorted to show himself or herself a good citizen. Continuing, they were reminded that—

"Social and family life in Belgium is marked by friendliness, a good-natured want of ceremony, and a strict adherence to old-established habits. No one need depart from these; indeed, nothing is more delightful than to find the characteristic life of Belgium reproduced in Great Britain. But, since they are in new surroundings, Belgians should not accentuate the difference between their customs and those of the British.

"Friendliness might easily become familiarity; unceremoniousness, disorder; and old habits, eccentricity. The refugees themselves should take care that order is maintained, that all behave properly, and that the hospitality, which has been so joyfully offered, should not become a burden. It would be well, therefore, that a certain discipline should be established, and that the refugees, in places where there are a certain number of them, should obey an authority chosen by and from them, either in the shape of a committee or of one or two representatives."

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Up and down the country local committees were formed to receive and place out the refugees. As there was no doubt that a few who came over as such were German spies in disguise, the Government made certain restrictions as to where the arrivals might be sent, and naturally they were not allowed to be located near the dockyard towns, or within five miles of the sea-coast. But in other places very large numbers were received, as at Glasgow, where over 3000 found shelter, while Sheffield had 1500, Leeds 1200, Manchester 1000, Bradford 400, and Exeter 2000. No hard-and-fast rules were laid down. The committees, which were largely composed of women, took all sorts of points into consideration, and in three months had found homes for 100,000 people. Most of the members of these committees were people who had had no experience whatever that would help them in the task they so willingly assumed. They brought, however, sound, practical common-sense to bear on the problem; and the Local Government Board summing up their work says, "However they may differ from one another in the details of their management, they have all carried out the work assigned to them in the most hospitable manner, and with the greatest consideration for those entrusted to their care. . . . Poor and rich alike have vied in showing practical sympathy with our Allies: Trade Unions have subscribed to the wants of their fellow-labourers, families with barely room for themselves have packed and squeezed to enable them to give hospitality to poor Belgians."

An early problem that arose was that of employment. The Belgian Government specially asked that none should be given in this country to any men between eighteen and thirty if physically fit for military

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service. A fairly complete register of all who were here was compiled through the committee at Folkestone, the War Relief Committee, and other sources, but the attitude generally at first was against putting them into any form of occupation. The reasons then were, that it was expected that there would be unemployment and distress among our own workers during the winter, and that as Belgian labour was often cheap labour, there might be a strong objection on the part of the Trade Unions, which would prejudice the pleasant relations established towards the earlier arrivals. Later on, however, the conditions pointed to an entire reversal of both these points.

Consultation took place between the Local Government Committee and representatives of the Labour Exchanges Department of the Board of Trade, and the primary conditions then laid down on the subject were—

"That no Belgian labour should be employed until every reasonable effort had been made to find British labour through the agency of the labour exchanges.

"That no Belgian labour should be employed at rates of wages lower, or on conditions less favourable, than those generally observed in the district concerned by agreement between the Associations of Employers and of Workmen, or failing such agreement, than those generally recognized in such district by good employers."

By the end of November there was an actual shortage of English labour in many branches of trade, due partly to the ready response to the call to arms and partly to enormous demands in all industries supplying army requirements for ourselves and our Allies. No fewer than 1280 employers had made application for Belgian labour. As far as the men are concerned,

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there is no occasion here to go into details, but in many directions special consideration was shown on behalf of Belgian women who would prefer to work if they could. One great shop, for instance, offered excellent weekly wages and all care and supervision to twenty-five pillow-lacemakers. Several ladies offered to receive and train young girls in domestic service; certain laundries had vacancies that Belgian ironers could well fill. But, as a general rule, it was found that while in this country the families desired to remain together as much as possible. Leeds carried out an interesting experiment with considerable success in opening a workshop-factory in which the refugees could make the furniture, clothes, and boots they would require on the repatriation of themselves and their fellows. On a small scale, Mrs. Wheeler, Mr. Pepler, and Mr. Rowntree conducted a little colony at Hampshire House of six families, who also were paid something for their work, in preparing things in view of the same happy day. Among these was one embroidress so skilful that her work was readily placed outside.

The War Relief Committee and the Local Government Board were of course the two main channels through which these stricken people were helped. But they do not exhaust by any means the lavish scale on which Great Britain testified her admiration of the heroism which held the whole German Army in check during the first days of the war, giving France and ourselves just the time essential to send the first Army Corps into the field. Those first ten or twelve days, as we now realize, were the great factors in upsetting the all too confident calculations of the General Staff of Berlin.

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Oxford and Cambridge opened their doors to the dispossessed students of Louvain. Certain of the Roman Catholic schools gave welcome to about 2000 boys and girls whose education should be enabled to go on. The first wounded to be received at Queen Mary's Royal Naval Hospital at Southend were Belgians, and the Red Cross nurses here worked for some thirty hours without rest to be ready for them, The ladies of the Hampton Court district provided a maternity home, which was a model of its kind, for the expectant mothers who had already endured so much.

Never did *The Daily Telegraph* start a more popular "Shilling Fund" than that which was to help to pay "our Debt of Honour to Brave Belgium," and the £200,000 thus raised has been placed in the hands of King Albert, for whatever purposes will, in the opinion of himself and his Government, be of the best and most lasting value to his people. A very large sum went also from many sympathisers direct to the Belgian Minister. Another fund, too, which secured much support was started to provide the Belgian soldiers sent to this country for treatment with clothing to take the place of what they had lost. America, in the fulness of her generous admiration, sent a whole shipload of flour, cheese, and other useful food-stuffs. There were Christmas parties in all directions for the children. Toys were sent them by the hundred; famous modistes set members of the staffs to make dainty little frocks and coats for them.

Even yet they are coming over, great as are the difficulties and dangers that they run in order to reach Holland to do so. The story of the friendliness and goodwill manifested on all sides here is known to every one still on Belgian soil; and there have been those who

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after months in the devastated land long for a little peace and rest before they begin to create anew their country and its once great volume of industry. In some things, perhaps, we have found that our guests are behind ourselves, and that we can teach them. Wherever that has been the case they have been apt pupils. But we, too, have learned something from their simple-hearted heroism, their intense love of the little country which had inherited such wonders of architecture, their true comprehension of the greater issues that the war has meant, not to Europe alone but to the whole world. Thanks to Lord Curzon of Kedleston, who has put Emile Cammaert's lines into English, the Belgian flag means more to us than it has ever done before, and we see in it—

Red for the blood of soldiers;
  Black, yellow, and red—
Black for the tears of mothers;
  Black, yellow, and red—
And yellow for the light and flame
  Of the fields where the blood was shed.

. . . . . .

Red for the purple of Heroes
  Black, yellow, and red—
Black for the veils of widows;
  Black, yellow, and red—
And yellow for the shining crown
  Of the victors who have bled.

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## CHAPTER X

### WHAT WOMEN DID IN FRANCE

**Help at hand—The organizations—Comment and criticism—A call for help—British women's reply—Praise of British nurses—Nerve-shattering experiences—Some other difficulties—Walking "gingerly"—Varied patients—The hospital with English women doctors—Its work and triumph—Women and the country's business—The middle-class woman and her work—Some tragedies—Some women heroes—A noble mother—A girl's bravery—Mlle. Brives—A girl who saved our soldiers' lives.**

FRANCE, like ourselves, has known in the last two or three decades what it is to have her "little wars." The Frenchwoman, with her instinct for organization, has kept the machinery in working order that should meet the care of the wounded, and on paper and at annual meetings nothing could have seemed better thought out than the Croix Rouge, the Société Française de Secours au Blessés Militaire, and the Union des Femmes de France. The second named is the oldest organization of the three, and at the outset of the war had resources behind it of £1,000,000 or more. It was early in the field sending out bands of nurses, and along the Marne and in the protracted struggle on the Aisne they rendered particularly useful work.

The Union des Femmes de France also had the



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personnel and materials to equip 104 hospitals for something like 13,000 men; while yet a fourth society, the Association des Dames Françaises, was ready by August 6 to send 105 hospitals to the service of the Army each providing 200 to 300 beds. Meantime, the Croix Rouge was equipping private houses, hotels, and even the famous buildings of the Comédie Française in Paris for the reception of the wounded. Before the seat of Government was transferred from Paris to Bordeaux there were, however, rather significant reports as to the "fashionableness" of Red Cross work in France with reference to smart uniforms and diamond-buckled high-heeled shoes. The inadequacy of the French hospital trains was also the subject of some adverse criticism as the autumn advanced. The British Red Cross Hospitals were chiefly concerned with the care of our own men, though with them sometimes a few of the French rank and file would be brought in.

It was at the beginning of November that the French War Department asked Mrs. Bedford Fenwick to find and send over some competent English nurses. A former Matron of St. Bartholomew's, and an earnest believer in the raising of the status of the nursing profession by means of State Registration, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick was in touch with nurses up and down the country, and she could call to her support various influential people. As a result the French Flag Nursing Corps was called into existence, and in the course of a very few weeks English nurses under orders of the Medical Chef de Service were at work in the French military hospitals at Rouen, Havre, Trouville, Deauville, Caen, and other centres.

After rendering excellent service here a number of

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the members of the Corps at the beginning of the year were sent into the war zone to nurse enteric cases, while others were sent to Bordeaux, where they were made responsible for the care of 700 beds. One of them said in a letter home, "The doctors treat us with great respect." Another nurse, enthusiastic as to the fighting qualities that her patients had shown, said, "I am proud to be nursing them." Included in the Corps were two trained masseuses—Sister Wadsworth and Miss Nevill Parker, who gave an interesting summary of their own special usefulness at Evreux:

"We are very happy, as we feel we are doing good work, and we were so badly needed; we are the first trained masseuses to work in this hospital. Every one made us very welcome, and the French doctor is specially kind to us, and takes great interest in our work. We have 400 convalescent soldiers in this hospital, and many require our services. It is a sad sight to see the crowd of cripples waiting outside our massage room each day; it is filled with all we require for our work, and we need fingers of iron to work in the contracted hard tendons and stretch the poor drawn limbs. I fear we have to give a great deal of pain, because massage has been so long delayed, now movement is of the greatest importance; but they seem very grateful. We have Turcos, Zouaves, Alpine Chasseurs, and every sort of French soldier amongst our patients. We have a bedroom in the hospital, and every one seems so anxious to make us comfortable. I am taking every opportunity of increasing my knowledge of the language; the patients roar sometimes at my French, and I do wonder what I have said; we also find plenty to smile at amongst so much that is tragic, which is a relief to us all."

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Miss Grace Ellison was called up to send home, after three months of steady working, a general Report of what had been accomplished, and it gives a very good idea of the conditions under which these English nurses worked: "I have often told the nurses that their work most certainly means the uplifting of the whole nursing profession in France. Quite half the soldiers are gentlemen, and having once been taken care of by the nurses they will have nothing else, and this war over they will demand that the conditions as they were at the beginning of the war shall not occur again. The doctors, too, have seen the nurses work. Dr. Maure, who is working at Talence, will now have only nurses in the theatre, and 'a ministerial order has been issued that only trained nurses are to work at the new contagious hospital shortly to be opened by the Government at Rouen.' The Prefect of Evreux writes: 'Everywhere I hear the praises of the English nurses.'"

The Report ends: "I have noticed in all the hospitals where our British nurses are working the enormous difference in the appearance of the place, the cleanliness of the patients, their well-made beds, and the comfortable manner they were lying in bed. The floors are clean, and the patients and *infirmières* have been induced not to spit on the floor, which they did when the nurses first came. The patients themselves look forward to being washed each day, and to having their bed-sores and backs attended to and their nails cut. The nurses generally complain of having too little work. Sixty dressings a day was not one day's work, one told me. It seems to me to have instituted important reforms such as these are, and to have made so many poor souls happy and comfortable, even if their lives have not been spared, is something of which

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to be immensely proud. The hospitals are primitive, but we in England do not seem to realize what it means to have a whole nation under arms, a nation so unprepared for war as was France. Her peace estimate for her hospitals was about 1000. That she has now 4800 hospitals proves how splendidly the much criticized French Service de Santé has been doing its work."

Then there was the tender and gentle effort of the nurses of the Society of Friends round Soissons and Chalons. Their ministrations were mainly intended for poor women driven out of their homes, and expecting to become mothers. Perhaps it is the known love of peace of these good people that gives a special vividness to some of their stories, as when Nurse Hannah Bellows found herself nearing Soissons, and could see the German shells bursting over the French batteries.

"Then we began to meet the motor-ambulances bringing back wounded. There has been terrible slaughter there the last two days. Then we met a little group of men straight from the trenches, very cheerful and gay, but worn out, plastered with mud from head to foot. Talk about the 'glory' of war,—one felt only the terror and the ghastliness of it, to hear these men talk with such evident pleasure of their deadly bayonet work and how the Germans dreaded it, and of the ferocity of the Moroccans in battle; one pointed to a stain on his tunic and said, 'Le sang d'un camarade.' But the next minute these men were talking about their wives and little ones and sending messages, as we took their addresses to send word to their wives that they are well and cheerful. These are the real men. The others of the minute before have some strange obsession."

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*Photo*] [*Newspaper Illustrations.*

A BELGIAN RED CROSS FIELD AMBULANCE AT PERVYSE.

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Nurse E. M. Pye, who was doing maternity work, tells of a poor young wife whose husband had been grievously wounded very early in the war, and who had herself lived for six weeks in a cellar at Rheims, dreading shells the whole time. Englishwomen may well be proud of the nurse who could inspire confidence after such nerve-shattering experiences. "The poor woman's courage is splendid," wrote Nurse Pye. "She said: 'If he never comes back to me, I must bring up my child and work for him—one must have courage these days—one has moments, but it is no good to weep, it only brings weakness.' She was cleanly lodged in Chamery but could not be cared for there. Her mother-in-law, also a refugee there with her, spoke most gratefully of having a place to send her daughter to, and said: 'I confide her to your care.' I think it is very touching the way these people trust us. There were we—arrived in the dusk, absolutely unexpected as to time, of a foreign country, and yet this young mother to be, rose up, laid down her sewing, put on her hat and cloak, and came away with us absolutely alone into the dark."

It was not the easiest thing in the world for the English nurse to win her way in France. Very few, indeed, had the least idea of the organization of the French Army—a point that may not seem to have much bearing on the dressing of wounds or the administration of medicine, but which had a very direct meaning as regards the etiquette and discipline of the wards. There were distinctions between *officiers de carrière* and *officiers de métier*, but all officers were theoretically entitled to separate bedrooms, so many courses for dinner, so much wine. But the private, brought in with a tattered uniform literally stiff with



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the mud of the trenches, might well be a son of one of the noblest families of the Faubourg St. Germain. Yet as long as his military rank was not above that of corporal, he could be told to take a share in the lighter duties of ward-cleaning and tidying up. The officers were perhaps of respectable *bourgeois* extraction, though they must be treated with the strictest regard for their rank and seniority.

It speaks volumes, therefore, for the tact and adaptability of the English nurses that they met the situation as they did. The French found it difficult to understand that English ladies were trained for their duties, and that their profession was recognized in society while they received pay—not too high, it is true—for the services they rendered. Yet when the recall to the Home hospitals came, there was genuine regret by the doctors at the loss of their capable, helpful co-workers. How the triumph was secured is told unconsciously by a nurse:

"From other quarters you must have heard the many difficulties that arise to meet English nurses working in France. We have been particularly isolated here, and with so few of us it has been quite impossible to organize nursing in a large institution, with probably 120 untrained helpers, who insisted on doing dressings, above all, feeding the patients with dainties, and then gazing in amazement at our attempt to make beds and keep things clean. It was evident from the beginning that we would be forced to walk 'gingerly,' and it has been by doing *what we could* and in some cases doing in Rome as the Romans, that we have managed in the slightest degree to gain the respect of the other workers. Even more difficult has it been to get the medical men to realize the meaning of 'certificated' nurses, and to

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recognize our nursing powers. Can you imagine the feelings of a *diplomée* when a doctor deliberately chooses in her presence a young man, by trade anything, to give several anæsthetics in a morning, or perhaps to do a big dressing in his absence? However, that is finished; we have worked quietly and we have gained."

Another nurse had an exceptional experience in the variety of her patients:

"It is a brighter tale to turn to the patients. Our first batch (120 men) were principally Soudanese and Senegalese, the second all French. Shall I ever forget the stretchers coming in, and the still, black figures? Not a sound; only their eyes moved. Icy cold they were, badly wounded, patiently enduring. They had been in the train three or four days, some had been wounded for three weeks, no attention but the first field dressing, the wounds of many pouring with pus; typhoids and scarlet fever amongst them. We had four deaths from tetanus in a week. How pitiful are the military funerals! We have sent a good many back to the firing line, and they go most bravely. From our English stores we fit each one with woollen comforts; they are most grateful.

"Our 'darkies' are so interesting; their gratitude and devotion are most touching. I have a ward of 14 beds, and from the beginning have done most of the dressings, so that 'Madame Sister' is a wonderful person in their eyes. One morning I had extra time off; the patients were told I was dead. One shook his head, and pointing to the ceiling said, 'Non, le bon Dieu ne fait jamais ça,' and when I arrived the welcome in Soudanese, Senegalese, Arabic, and French was not to be forgotten."

One very notable effort was the hospital organized

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for France by English medical women. To be quite frank about it, the idea at first was not at all a popular one outside the ranks of the feminine members of the profession. The Army Medical Department would have nothing to say to it and refused it any recognition. Many thoughtful people at home indeed said that they quite approved the attitude. Women doctors were not wanted for the men, who alone would be their patients; there were hospital appointments calling aloud for women at home; a mass of useful work could be done by them.

But Dr. Louisa Garrett Anderson and Dr. Flora Murray had decided to go, and they made up their Staff and chose their nurses. Dr. Garrett Anderson, who, years ago, fought with some three or four other brave women the right of the sex to enter the profession of healing, fully approved her daughter's course of action. It is said that her farewell words to the party were, "My dears, if you make a success of the work you are going to do, you will advance the position of medical women by a hundred years."

The French War Office manifested a more friendly spirit to the ladies and officially assigned to them Claridge's Hotel in the Champs Elysées. They reached Paris on October 15, and three days later were in readiness to receive patients. The whole equipment was admirable, and first some English, then some French officers were placed under their care. A record of good work came home, and the Army Medical Department made it known that they now recognized the hospital as fully as did the French. Quietly all through the winter the women worked, and an occasional note on some specially difficult case would appear in one or other of the medical papers.

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It was in dramatic and unexpected manner that the full triumph achieved by the medical women was made known. The occasion was a meeting, with the Duchess of Marlborough in the chair, at Sunderland House in February to appeal for funds to make some essential extensions in the accommodation of the London School of Medicine for Women. Among the speakers was Surgeon-General Sir Alfred Keogh, Director-General of the Army Medical Department. He paid high tribute to the efficiency and underlying spirit of the School, and amid a sense of wonder as to what he was going to announce said that he had had many letters, entirely unsolicited, telling him how admirably this hospital managed entirely by women had fulfilled the duties it had taken up. He inquired further regarding it and said: "As a result, I have asked these ladies to leave Paris and to return here to take up yet greater responsibilities. I have requested them to undertake complete control of a hospital with 500 beds, or for the matter of that 1000 beds, if they feel equal to it, and I am glad to say they have accepted it."

Thus, the thing that a year ago would have seemed unthinkable even to advanced and progressive minds came about. The erstwhile buildings of the Holborn Infirmary were assigned to Dr. Garrett Anderson and her co-workers, and they cut it literally to pieces, maintaining hardly more than the outer walls. For they were determined that no hospital should be more perfect for the treatment of whatever wounds or shattered nerves might be sent to their care, and that it should stand as the convincing testimony which converted even the strongest opponents and most sceptical folk to a belief in woman's skill in one of the

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most difficult fields in which the modern surgeon or physician can possibly work.

Nothing was more wonderful in France than the way in which the women took up the whole work and business of the country and carried it on. Even the most light-hearted felt the call to some phase of usefulness, for all the able-bodied men, ostensibly up to 45, were called up for service, and as a fact many much older than that were engaged in field-transport, post office, and commissariat work. One who knows these older men particularly well describes how "the transformation of the little bourgeois into a hardened, sometimes heroic, trooper is one of those miracles which the love of country makes when that country is attacked. The little bourgeoise at home also is brave and sometimes heroic, in her own way, carrying on the work by which she, her husband, and her children live. I think one of the most pathetic letters I ever saw was that from a small linendraper in the trenches to his wife in the shop at home. Two lines about the trenches, the Boches, and the different noises of shells. The rest of the letter was good, businesslike advice about replenishing the shop stock with the line of spring materials best likely to sell."

It was exactly in that spirit that the Frenchwoman of the middle classes set herself to face the new situation. Those in better-to-do circumstances went to the hospitals. They had not much practical knowledge of nursing, a fact they constantly deplored. But they could make themselves useful, and they did. They could sweep and scrub and clean; they could carry round the soup, the *tisane*, the plate of fruit that was welcome to the man on the way to recovery after his wounds. They could be useful at the railway stations,

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as was shown for a long period on behalf of the homeless refugees from the fighting zone. At the Gare du Lyons, night after night, those who erstwhile were gay, irresponsible members of society were in waiting, as trains at frequent intervals brought up fresh mobs of dazed, starving, dirty, half-stupefied men, women, and children from the north. The bewildered women, the piteous children, were easily dealt with by their helping sisters. The job came when huge, hulking men and boys, some desperate, some drunk, and all in a wild sort of dream, had to be welcomed, fed, and comforted in a way, and sent to sleep the rest of the night in empty railway carriages drawn up on a siding. The girls who had never done anything before but amuse themselves in Paris society tackled the uncouth, alarming men with a courage and tact to which one took one's hat off. A great burly ruffian would burst into the committee room shouting for drink, and ten minutes afterwards a delicately-nurtured girl had made a civilized being of him, and he was drinking a cup of cocoa and quietly telling scraps of stories of all he had undergone.

It has been the women who kept all the market gardens up to their standard of productivity. They had the help of the elderly men and the young boys, but all the winter Paris missed none of its little luxuries in salads or forced vegetables, while the early radishes and the first asparagus which reached Covent Garden as well were grown under the women's skill and patience. Late every evening they set out in that series of processions of carts converging on Paris, and bringing in the milk and vegetables, the eggs and poultry, and so much more necessary for the market's supplies. These carts have been chiefly driven by women, who,

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moreover, have acted as market-porters, sweepers, and in such useful capacities.

It has been the same in regard to the land, and the yet heavier work of agriculture. As far back as the outset of the war, it was her task to gather in the harvest. In the autumn she went to the ploughing, and prepared the earth for the spring sowings. Throughout the winter she managed the cows, and was thrifty, provident, and careful as to their provender. With the lengthening days she has been out early and late, hearing only rarely from the husband, for the French peasantry are not great correspondents, but hoping and trusting all was going well with him, while it was her part to keep the homestead as it should be. Then they planted the crops, and to the women-folk it is due that the prospects for the summer and autumn are as bright as they appear.

There have been the tragedies, of course. Often it is the widow who is carrying on the farm, with her children's future impelling her to toil for their sakes. Now and again a letter reveals a sorrowful case, as that of a woman in the Fere Champenoise district, where some of the early fighting took place. She and her husband had put up a nice house of brick and tiles, but when the enemy came along in September it was set on fire. Two days later her husband was killed, leaving her with two children and penniless and ruined. Yet for their sake she did not lose heart. The workers sent by the Society of Friends to restore shattered buildings found her, and reconstructed a part of the house and restored the out-buildings, putting new courage into her for the future.

There will be, too, a long record of events of individual heroism on the part of Frenchwomen, and

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it is Mlle. Eugenie Antoine who has the distinction of being able to say that one of the first English decorations awarded was conferred by the King upon her. That was the Royal Red Cross, and it was bestowed upon her for the splendid courage she displayed in tending English wounded soldiers at Vailley-sur-Aisne when the village was under a hot bombardment by the enemy. Hardly less splendid was the conduct of Mlle. Marie Pierron, who about the same time was mentioned in French Army despatches for the way in which she searched a wood all night to find the wounded, rendering them efficient first aid until Red Cross transports came up, which she directed along the best route for safety.

The French official *Gazette* made special mention also of Sœur Marie Rosnet, matron of a hospital at Clermont-en-Argonne. The Germans had set some houses on fire, but with such grave dignity and devotion did this brave woman meet the invaders that she actually shamed them into sending a company of sappers to extinguish the flames that others of their comrades-in-arms had kindled. Having done that, her true womanliness asserted itself in lavishing as much care upon the enemy's wounded as her own countrymen.

Roman Catholics the world over will always hold in high honour Sœur Julie of the Order of St. Charles of Nancy. President Poincaré with his own hands decorated her with the Cross of the Legion d'Honneur, for in the horrors of the attack on Nancy, when shells were flying overhead and hand-to-hand fighting was raging in the streets, she was calmly going into any danger-zone, bringing out the wounded, and attending to their injuries. And, with true and devout faith, she dared what to her seemed even greater things.

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On the day that the German soldiers came into the town some of them began the work of pillage in the church at one end of it, while the few dozen Chasseurs of the defending force were still keeping up the fight in the streets on the farther side of the river. The enemy tried, amongst other things, to break open the Sanctuary in which is kept the Pyx, containing the consecrated wafers, by firing several shots at the lock. After a time they gave up the attempt and moved on in search of other game.

But in the intensity of her reverence for the sacred Element Sœur Julie entered the church with bullets falling near, and, finding a bayonet, worked with frenzied eagerness to open the door of the Sanctuary. When she succeeded, she realized to her horror that the Pyx had been pierced by bullets, and that its consecrated contents were broken and scattered. She knew well enough that no hands save those of a priest ought to touch them, yet as a *religieuse* she felt they would be treated far more reverently by herself than by the enemy.

With the humblest prayers for forgiveness of her own presumption she gathered up every fragment, placed them in the battered Pyx, and conveyed them to her own convent for safety. But later, to preserve them from wanton destruction, she felt it her duty to consume the wafers. A few hours later, when the priest came to see the sufferers, she made to him her moving confession as to what she had done. He relieved her mind and told her she had done perfectly right.

There is a charming little sequel too, to the tale of Sister Julie. A few weeks afterwards a squadron of Chasseurs passed through the ruined town, where she

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was still living in what remained of her convent. The Captain called on her, and asked her to come outside with him. He turned to his men and reminded them how, the last time they had seen her, she was tending the wounded with shell bursting near and the town in flames. "Here, men, you see this lady again, the President of the Republic has himself pinned the cross on her breast for her courage." He then drew his sword from its scabbard with a broad sweeping gesture and raised it to his lips in her honour, ordering the men to parade before her.

Another upon whom the Cross of the Legion d'Honneur was conferred was Mlle. Canton-Bacara, attached to the Ambulance Station at Vauxbrion. Under a heavy artillery fire, she went fearlessly out to assist wounded men to safety, and at her own wish remained within a zone of the greatest danger in order to carry out her work of alleviation. She herself ultimately received a nasty wound from a bursting shell.

Of the attitude of the Frenchwoman's mind there is perhaps nothing more illuminating than a brave little episode of a terribly bereaved mother.

At the hour of the Angelus, as he returned to his post near Verdun, a corporal of gendarmes saw an old woman kneeling by the side of a soldier's grave. He approached with his three companions and asked the woman what she did there.

She replied, "Five of my sons were killed early in the war, and I do not know where they lie. This is the grave of my sixth and last child. I have come from La Rochelle to render him the tribute of a prayer." The four gendarmes, touched beyond words, silently, with a single motion, presented arms to this *mater*

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*dolorosa.* At this the old woman rose from her knees and, in a firm voice, cried: "Vive la France, quand même."

One would fain recall, too, the cool courage of an elderly Alsatian woman at a small place near Senlis. The German commander arrived, and furiously demanded supplies, asking where all the responsible people were.

"As regards the Mayor," said this old lady, "you, General, should know that as well as any one."

"Why?" he asked.

"Because, General, the Mayor has two young daughters, and he has taken them to safety."

The commander was evidently rather ashamed, and said much more gently to the old lady that he would show they were not savages. As a result, though the town was shelled, personal rights were respected.

Some of these brave Frenchwomen had the distinction of being named in official documents such as the Military Orders of the Day. At St. Die, Mlle. Suche, a school teacher, was called upon to act as interpreter to hold parley with the enemy. Later, she took refuge in a cellar; but the cries of a little child almost naked and suffering from the cold induced her to go from her comparative safety to seek some garments. As she did so, a fragment of shell struck her and inflicted such injuries that she died, and truly has joined the noble army of martyrs to the highest call of duty.

Another schoolmistress was Mlle. Bouret of Meretz, who fearlessly remained in the town during the German occupation. Not only did she plunge into the Municipal buildings when they were ablaze and saved the civic

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registers, but she rescued a wounded Frenchman, who was in a position of great danger, and nursed him back to health.

Single-handed for twelve days at Meyenmontier, in the Vosges, did Mlle. Nicolle take charge of 300 wounded French soldiers without the help of a single doctor. The number was doubled when the enemy occupied the town, but she did her best for the Germans who had fallen, and it was perhaps in gratitude for this that, when the invaders demanded 160 hostages, she was able to get exemption for sixty of them, including the Mayor.

It is from a British soldier's letter that we get this proof of a French girl's bravery. She was only about sixteen years of age, and it was after one of the hardest day's fighting along the Aisne :

" When many of the British wounded were lying out in the open, nearly mad with thirst, and with no prospect of relief till next day, they saw a charming girl picking her way among the dead and wounded. She had risked her life to bring them goat's milk and wine because she was grateful to the British troops for helping to drive the German invaders back. She seemed to be without fear, and tripped along in spite of the shells and rifle fire. ' We were all,' says the sergeant, ' stricken with grief when she was carried into hospital next day. She had been shot on the way back. It was a nasty wound, but after an operation the doctors hoped she would pull through. Every soldier who saw her prays for her every night.' "

Mlle. Audrie Brives, president of the Cercle Jeanne d'Arc for the study of art and literature, is another heroine of the war. At the outbreak she was in Brussels, for she has a considerable share of Belgian

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blood in her, and the first thing that she and the members of her society did was to secure a number of the little country carts in which the people were wont to bring in their market produce. These the brave ladies filled with stores and medical comforts and took them fearlessly into the most devastated areas. "We tried," she said, "to go wherever there had been fighting to help the wounded of the Allies, but we had also to do what we could for the enemy too."

One day Mlle. Brives heard that a train containing French and British soldiers was to pass through Alost. She collected all the money she could and a large basket of food and went down to the railway station. At the door were some German soldiers on guard. She went straight up to them and asked them when the train was due. They said they did not know. "Very well, then," she said, "I'll wait inside. I've come for the wounded," and walked in. When the train came in half full of German wounded and half of French and British, she went first to the Germans and distributed food to them. Then she went to the prisoners and with each hunk of bread managed to give them some money, four francs to the wounded, three to the rest, so that they might be able to buy what they needed most when they arrived at their destination.

The second excursion was to Charleroi, where fighting was reported to be going on. As Mlle. Brives and her companion drew near they met the inhabitants who had left their homes in terror streaming along the roads. "Who is fighting?" she asked, and was told it was the French and the British, who, the peasants declared, had women with them in uniforms and with moustaches, who fought like the men. This was their first impression of the Highlanders. Mlle. Brives

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pushed on into Charleroi, where she found the town full of dead and dying. In the narrow streets the fighting had been so close and murderous that the bodies stood propped against one another in heaps. In these surroundings she and her companions set to work and were able to save some of the wounded. On other occasions she searched the dead upon the abandoned battlefields in order to save their identification discs for the information of their wives.

She attributed a great deal of her success to the carefully thought-out plan by which she assumed an air of having a perfect right to go wherever she wished to succour the wounded. When she met patrols or outposts she made straight for the officer commanding, and most volubly told him all about herself and her work, ending up by offering to show her papers. By this time, however, the officer felt it must be all right and did not even ask to see them—which was fortunate for her, as her only pass of any value was a Red Cross brassard with a German official stamp. However, it served her, and during the long drawn-out struggle on the Yser she got to Ostend, where the enemy was so positively grateful for her tender ministrations that at last she got a letter commending her to German authorities.

Presently she got into France, where her efforts for the Allies were even greater. Among the treasured possessions she will always value is that of a much-used pocket-knife that had belonged to a miner from Lens. She had tended him with all the devotion that a good woman can bestow upon a brave man, and when the end was very near, he gave it to her as the only thing he had to offer her. For several months in France she went about gathering money and gifts

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for the men, and undertook a journey to Rome to secure the approval of the Pope of her further plans of help when the great advance into Belgium is made by the Allies.

There is one little party of half a score of British soldiers who will ever hold one plucky and resourceful French girl in honoured esteem. In the earlier days of the war she was the useful general servant of a school for girls, but as the Germans approached the town, teachers and pupils all dispersed, leaving her in the building with one feeble and partially paralysed old lady. The enemy swept through the town plundering ruthlessly, and when they came to the school they seized all the beds and bedding, taking them into the chapel *annexe*, which they intended to use as a hospital.

But just an hour ahead of the invaders had come ten English soldiers, footsore, tired, and hungry, and this brave girl had conducted them to a damp and dreary "grotto" that she thought would be a safe hiding-place. The place is mildly described as "not comfortable," but in some way or other after a day or two, she managed to get her friends up to the top floor of the main building. Here, of course, the difficulty was to feed them, while she realized fully that discovery would mean shooting for herself as well as for them.

With calm audacity the girl professed much interest in the German wounded, and even proposed that she should do the cooking for them, an offer they gladly accepted. Thus, she had the command of rations, and the use of her kitchen-stove inside. With ceaseless watchfulness she used to convey odd portions of food to her real friends, and was able

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even, with the collusion of two or three smart French boys, to secure them an occasional cigarette. For several days she kept the men hidden, till the day when the Germans made a brief, temporary evacuation of the town. That was the chance for her friends. They slipped away and rejoined the Allied lines. She, too, got away to safety, and none too soon, for the town was fiercely bombarded and the school knocked down. But she has been promised that if all or any of that party return safe after the war she shall be a guest of honour under far happier conditions.

Mr. Philip Gibbs, when in France, had the good fortune to see as pathetic a little letter perhaps as any that were written. It was addressed by a working girl to the officers and men of a French regiment, and this is his rendering of it :

" Gentlemen," she wrote, in her big handwriting, " I do not know one of you. So I write to all of you and ask you what you know of the death of Jean M——, and of his last moments. I should be very grateful to you, gentlemen, if you would write all that to me, with as many details as you can give. We know nothing, nothing, of that sad fatality. ' He is dead.' But where ? How ? There is nothing about all that. So I write to you, his comrades.

" I am his little cousin, so tell me everything, and do not be afraid of causing me pain. I am brave, because you set me the example.

" Did he get a packet from me before his death, or a letter, do you know ? If the packet did not arrive soon enough it is for you. I told him : it is for you and your comrades. Perhaps he gave you some of the things I sent ?

" As for my last letter, it was full of wishes for all



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in the trench. It had a green envelope like this one—so take it.

"Good-bye, gentlemen; good courage and good luck. Poor Jean would say, as I do, that the sacrifice of so many lives may not be useless. Vive la France!

"*P.S.*—I add some flowers, which you will put, please, on Jean's grave, if there is no danger of any kind to yourselves."

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# CHAPTER XI

## RED CROSS, AMBULANCE, AND VOLUNTARY AID

**The three great organizations—Call to Voluntary Aid members—A record of good service—Early help in France—A leader of women—Stores and motors for the wounded.**

IN the average mind there is perhaps more vague and indefinite knowledge as regards the voluntary system of help in the war than in anything else. You are told that some one is " a Red Cross nurse " ; of some other it is said, " She is doing Ambulance work " ; and of a third, " She is in one of these Voluntary Aid Detachments." But not one in a hundred could clearly state exactly what they meant by either of these statements ; and still less could they show that any co-ordination or system ran through them all. The present war, it is true, is the first occasion on which there has been any underlying and central idea in the linking-up of the help that the trained nurse, or the partially trained but willing and enthusiastic individual, is ready to render, and that of the kindly amateur who would do anything to make herself useful under proper control and direction.

Though the British Red Cross Association is by no means an old organization it will be for the greater convenience if that is explained first Its origin goes back



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to another Austrian stricken field—that of Solferino —when the humane and gentle heart of Henri Dunant was moved, on the sight of the appalling sufferings of the untended wounded and sick, to ask whether such horrors were even in war quite inevitable for the individual man who at the behests of discipline and obedience to orders was the ultimate victim. He worked hard to win over others to his views, and ultimately was able to bring together a Convention at Geneva in 1863. It was then that the symbol of the Red Cross on a white ground, the reversal of the Swiss flag of a white cross on a red ground, was adopted as the sign that the wounded should be exempt from neglect, and that the display of this emblem on camp, ship, train, or wagon should place it above attack or hostile demonstration.

Yet the ruthless enemy of to-day, in the object lesson of "frightfulness," has attempted by torpedo and submarine to wreck hospital ships thus plainly blazoned; has deliberately flung shells into buildings in France and Belgium displaying the Red Cross as the sign of a hospital; has fired on surgeons actually at their work of mercy in the field.

There are not many, perhaps, who remember that, though Great Britain was a party to the Geneva Convention, it was the needs of the German Army after Gravelotte and Sedan in 1870 that called the first English Red Cross Society into existence; or that this country sent as much as £300,000, in money and comforts for the sufferers, to the sick and wounded, together with a goodly proportion of the then small band of qualified nurses to their aid. The Society kept after that a corporate existence, and despatched some help to the victims of the Russo-Turkish War in 1878, and of the later Graeco-Turkish War. But even

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before the South African War, which was the great parting of the ways between the old and the new conceptions of nursing in the Field, a recognition of the possibilities of such an organization was secured.

It was during the tenure by the Marquis of Lansdowne of the Office of the Secretary of State for War that the first endeavour was made to bring the Red Cross Society, the St. John Ambulance Association, and the original Army Nursing Reserve into accord, and the result was exceedingly helpful in the South African campaign. Several special field hospitals went out, supplementing the military resources to such good purpose that, after the war, it was deemed advisable to strengthen the Council. Queen Alexandra —whose speeches have been very few, but when they have been made, very much to the point—said, in defining what the general principles should be, that "the Society shall be entirely voluntary; and, while in touch with the War Office and Admiralty, shall be organized and act independently of those Departments in time of peace; but naturally in time of war, it must be under naval and military control. I therefore now appeal to all the women of the Empire to assist me in carrying out this great scheme, which is essentially a woman's work, and which is the only way we can assist our gallant Army and Navy to perform their arduous duties in time of war."

Next to be considered is the St. John Ambulance Association, the modern development of the work that originated in the twelfth century with the Knights of St. John. How far this continued as a power for relief in war time may be rather traditional, but Queen Victoria in 1888 was satisfied that enough had survived to give some historical dignity to a revival of

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the Knights and Ladies of Grace and Justice. Before that, however, the St. John Ambulance Association had taken upon itself an extremely useful duty in providing for instruction in first aid in case of accidents in the home, the streets, the railways, and the mines. Gradually there came into being a body of capable men to be relied upon in emergency, and of nurses no less useful. The police soon availed themselves of their collaboration, and at all times for several years past when large crowds were likely to be in the streets to see great pageants, or to assemble in the parks and open spaces for Bank Holidays, there have been these useful people doing a valuable public service in the quietest possible way. Small wonder that they were called upon to help in South Africa, or that they proved auxiliaries of real value.

Then came the formation of the Voluntary Aid Detachments. This was an outcome of the conversion of the Volunteers into the Territorial Army, formed originally, of course, with the idea of constituting the Home Defence system. But their existence implied the creation also of a scheme of Territorial Hospitals, and it was Miss Haldane, while Lord Haldane was Secretary of State for War, who worked out the scheme by which these hospitals should all be placed under a highly qualified matron and trained sisters, but could further utilize the services always so readily and earnestly offered in time of national crisis of those who would be classed more or less as amateurs. As a fact, however, those who took up this Voluntary Aid work some three or four years ago, and long before there was any sign on the horizon of the present war, threw themselves into the task of preparing themselves for emergency with an enthusiasm very far removed

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from the amateur's rather erratic courses. The organization was in good working order at the outbreak of the war. The members of these detachments had taken themselves and their work very seriously. Those who wished to do the nursing had attended full courses of lectures; not a few had gone through short courses of actual training in hospital wards, though it must be said that the average matron and sister did not encourage this as a practice, fearing that a certain number, on the strength of such knowledge, would set themselves up as fully qualified nurses. The pharmacist had to secure a certificate as to her knowledge, and the cooks had to show that they were capable of the work they had offered to do.

A scale of equipment had been officially laid down, and the quartermaster was responsible that all the stores were available. Beds and bedding, furniture of all kinds, a full kitchen appointment had to be in readiness, and she had to be certain where perishable medical stores could be obtainable, at very short notice. The house in which the hospital would be located had been chosen, and the women's detachment would be expected to know how it was to be arranged, which rooms would constitute the chief wards, where the operating installation could be placed, what space there would be for offices, and so forth. Periodical inspection by officers sent down by the War Office took place, and maintained a standard of efficiency.

A high standard of "working for the detachment" was established in the fact that non-attendance at practice meant a mark in the book and a consequent lowering of the year's average effort. But it is only those who knew the quiet, steady work that women put into their self-imposed task who realize to-day

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what it has all meant. There was no show, no advertisement over it, but there was often a good deal of real work, and many an afternoon that might have been spent at lawn tennis or on the golf links is now reflected in a quiet, helpful service for which the country may well feel grateful at this juncture.

The first days of August, when none knew what course the fighting might take, saw a mobilization of all the twenty-three Territorial hospitals, and a general call to all Voluntary Aid Detachments to be ready for whatever demands might be made upon them. In the interesting summary of the first six months of the war work of the British Red Cross Society, it is recorded: "The Voluntary Aid Detachments began actively to develop their local preparations immediately upon the declaration of war, and when the great influx of wounded Belgians reached this country some 30,000 patients were arranged for in the course of forty-eight hours, mainly through the good offices of these detachments.

"From that time on hospitals staffed by Voluntary Aid Detachments have been in active operation all over the country, and now [in March] the society has on its list some 705 auxiliary home hospitals, containing 19,578 beds, the great bulk of which had been organized, opened, and staffed by Voluntary Aid Detachments under the orders and control of the military authorities. Although the Voluntary Aid Detachments were originally formed for service with the Territorial Force upon invasion, they have proved of the very greatest service as an adjunct to the ordinary hospital establishments of the United Kingdom."

To that may be added the ungrudging praise of one especially competent to judge of their work, who

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frankly said: "The detachments literally saved the situation as far as the Belgian arrivals were concerned. Without them it is impossible to say what would have been done for such a vast number in the terrible condition they were in, with wounds quite untended."

How vast an organization this came to be may be judged from a table supplied by the British Red Cross Society in the middle of April. It does not pretend to be more than approximate, for in the pressure of the work that was being done some returns had not come in. But it is below the full total. Under this Society are 82 per cent of the Voluntary Aid Detachments, and these are their figures alone. The St. John Ambulance controls 14 per cent, and county Associations 3 per cent, the odd 1 per cent covering exact points of decimals and a few exceptional workers.

DETACHMENTS

| | Men. | Women. | Total. |
|---|---|---|---|
| England . . . | 334 | 1284 | 1618 |
| Wales . . . . | 29 | 131 | 160 |
| Scotland . . . | 108 | 321 | 429 |
| Total . . | 471 | 1736 | 2207 |

PERSONNEL

| | Men. | Women. | Total. |
|---|---|---|---|
| England . . . | 14,487 | 33,835 | 48,322 |
| Wales . . . . | 1,350 | 3,421 | 4,771 |
| Scotland . . . | 4,273 | 8,693 | 12,966 |
| Total . . | 20,110 | 45,949 | 66,059 |

A further interesting table is that which shows the

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Red Cross First Aid Nursing and Hygiene and Sanitation certificates granted:

| | |
|---|---|
| First Aid, from November 1911 . . | 49,480 |
| Advanced First Aid, from December 1913 | 6,748 |
| Nursing, from January 1911 . . | 36,675 |
| Advanced Nursing, from February 1914 . | 5,278 |
| Hygiene and Sanitation, from December 1913 . . . . . | 2,005 |
| Advanced Hygiene and Sanitation, from June 1914 . . . . . | 21 |
| | 100,207 |

In addition to these, there have been bestowed for "proficiency" since March 1913, 13,529, and for "technical knowledge" since February 1914, 352 certificates.

In April, however, the Voluntary Aid Detachments entered upon a new phase of work, and were called to a yet more important task. Good as their smaller hospitals were, it could not be claimed that they were economical, either from the point of view of cost per patient or from what, at that juncture, was certainly no less important—that of making the most of the limited supply of trained nursing available. The War Office decided that it would tend to improvement in both directions to arrange that as the wounded are sent home, when the great advance of the Allies begins, they shall be nursed in vast auxiliary military hospitals.

This did not imply that the usefulness of the Voluntary Aid Detachment and other privately organized hospitals was at an end. On the contrary, they then entered upon another phase of good service as convalescent homes, in which the importance of the most highly-trained nursing is less urgent. For this purpose many of them are particularly well adapted, as they

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are in all sorts of healthy localities, and will meet all requirements as to mild and genial or bracing atmosphere.

The change, however, involved an entirely altered condition of things as far as the voluntary nursing is concerned. The Matron-in-Chief by that time knew practically the whole nursing strength of the country, whether in Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service and its reserves of each degree, or in the great civil hospitals from which further nursing aid could be spared. Canada, where the standard of nurse training is exceedingly good, has also been asked to send any of these ladies who would be willing thus to assist, and New Zealand also was able to promise to send over some fifty, the offer being accepted with all dignity and formality by the Colonial Office on behalf of the Army Council. But even with this patriotic rally of the nurses—a fit analogy to the ready help that the men were giving to the Empire's service—it was evident that some supplemental aid would be required.

The appeal was made to the qualified members of the Voluntary Aid Detachments. It was estimated that any number between 3000 and 5000 would be wanted, and to deal with those offering their services a special "Selection Department" was opened at Devonshire House, where Lady Ampthill and Mrs. Furse dealt with the applicants. The conditions of service were by no means easy, as may be judged from the undertaking each one was required to sign on acceptance:

After one month's probation they must be prepared to sign on for one year or the duration of the war.

They must have First Aid and Home Nursing certificates.

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Age limit, 23-38.

They must wear regulation indoor and outdoor uniforms.

They must live in under usual military discipline.

Expenses will be paid, such as travelling, board, lodging, washing.

They will be asked to be inoculated against enteric.

A salary of £20 per year is offered.

An allowance of £1 per quarter paid in arrear for upkeep of uniform.

In view of the need of their services with their detachments it is recommended that neither commandants nor quartermasters should volunteer.

A year's service, living in a hospital under military discipline with the strictly defined hours on and off duty, was a good deal to ask; yet the response came well. Perhaps it was a test of something in addition to high patriotism, lofty as that in this work was. There was with many that sense which none expressed better than the Dean of Durham:

> She nurses best who always has in mind
> That touch so tender and that look so kind
> Of Him who came this mortal frame to wear.
> . . . . . .
> The hands that thus do serve have wondrous love.
> They never weary—never careless prove;
> To such the night watch, silent as the tomb
> Save for its groans, has neither dread nor gloom,
> No task too menial, naught too hard can prove,
> Their meanest act is sanctified by love.
> Nurse on, dear daughter, shrink not; it is He,
> On the White Throne shall say, It was for Me.

Those competent to speak have expressed their praise unsparingly. From the serious and professional columns of the *British Medical Journal* comes a tribute

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that all Voluntary Aid workers may well be proud to have earned :—

" When one reflects on the amount of thought and time that has been so well given to the conversion of such buildings to their new purpose, and to the organization of its staff, and when one realizes how ladies have taken up again their calling or set themselves to learn, giving up their ordinary avocations to work in the hospitals for spells of twelve hours by day or night week after week, and have not grown weary in well-doing, one can only express the heartiest admiration for their patriotic self-sacrifice, and congratulate all concerned on the success of the work. Not very much money is asked for. All the skilled work is done without fee or reward, but a certain small amount of ordinary labour is needed, and as the War Office allowance for maintenance is only 2s. a day for each wounded soldier in the hospital, something is needed to meet the actual cost, which is nearer 28s. than 14s. a week per patient. An appeal we have seen is singularly modest, for it is said that a sum of £1200, towards which £200 has already been received, would be sufficient to cover the expenses for two years."

When the distinctions between the three great arms of voluntary service is understood, it is easier to differentiate as to what each has undertaken. From War Office statistics officially supplied after six months of the war, it appears that the ratio of sick and wounded men who were nursed in the Military Hospitals is 14·6 to 1, to the 2 to 1 of the voluntary hospitals. It is an interesting little fact, for it disposes of a good deal of the criticism that the Army Medical Department was less well prepared than it should have been. But in the early days of hostilities the prompt readiness

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of the British Red Cross Society was unquestionably helpful, and its immediate readiness to step into the breach greatly facilitated the movements of that time, allowing at least breathing space. One of its first and most useful tasks was that of classifying the offers of houses to be used as Red Cross hospitals in this country. Something like 3000 houses were offered in these first weeks of the war, and the Society was able to advise the acceptance provisionally of about 700, affording accommodation for about 20,000 beds.

It was to Belgium, of course, that the earliest parties went out, and mention has been made already of the rapidity with which the nurses were mobilized and sent out. Now that one and another can relate something of what actually occurred in the first six weeks of the war, or up to the fall of Antwerp, all bear testimony to the very real danger to which the nurses were constantly exposed. At Furnes, for instance, the bed quitted by a nurse only an hour previously when she went on duty was blown to pieces by a shell; and it was actually under fierce firing that a string of motor omnibuses carried the wounded out of Antwerp, the nurses standing on the platforms for all the world like conductors, and doing all they could to alleviate suffering.

The first Red Cross party to go to Paris set out on August 29, but as that was the time when the Germans were really approaching the French capital, it was deemed advisable that they should at once be sent back. Just a month later, another contingent went out to the Croix Rouge Hospital, and another to the Ambulance Americaine, Neuilly-sur-Seine. One after another followed at Moka, near St. Malo; the Hôtel Bristol in Paris, at Notre Dame des Greves, Dinard,

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Dinant, Treguier, Deauville, where the English nurses worked most satisfactorily in conjunction with the French Army Medical Department; at Dieppe, Calvados, Caen, in a hospital for which the Church Army assumed organizing responsibility, as also it did along the railway lines of communications, in helping men who were victims of accidents or illness; at Mundeville, where again French and English sisters worked in perfect accord; Calais, Dunkirk, Wimereux, and Chaumont.

The largest of the Red Cross hospitals, and indeed the base of all its work, has been at Boulogne. It was situated in a beautiful country house that had belonged to Baron de Rothschild, and was admirably well equipped. At the outset most of the patients were French, and nothing that they required was ever lacking. Since then it has maintained an excellent work. Mrs. Ludlow, R.R.C., well remembered for her devoted services during the siege of Ladysmith, was matron, after she had given some two months of valuable help to the Society at home, with Lady Giffard, in the task of selecting the nurses who offered themselves for duty whether on the Continent or at home.

One of the notable features in regard to the nursing in the present war has been the extreme quietness and privacy with which the ladies who have filled the most responsible positions have carried out their duties. Probably not one in a thousand has heard the name of Miss Becher, the Matron-in-Chief, upon whom has fallen some of the most onerous and arduous administrative work that any woman has ever been called upon to take up. Still fewer would know the name of Miss Sarah Alice Claridge, Matron-in-Chief of the St. John Ambulance Nurses. Yet she

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has rendered far bigger service to the Empire than many a man given honorary degrees and elevated into the ranks of the lesser importancies. She was nursing in the Birmingham General Hospital when she joined the former Army Nursing Reserve and went out to South Africa, where she was first a Sister and then Matron of No. 14 General Hospital. Then she accepted the offer of the Shiré Highlands Railway to organize a hospital in Nyassaland. This institution was located in a three-room shed with a corrugated iron roof, yet it was all that the pioneer men opening up the railway had in case of sickness, and as the doctor was constantly called away she was frequently the only person in charge, with natives to do the rougher work.

Ultimately the doctor himself broke down, and Miss Claridge accompanied him to the coast, saw him safely on his ship, and returned with her convoy of twenty-two natives to do her best alone until another doctor could come out. She fell a victim herself to malaria, but the railway directors were so well pleased with her work that they accepted her advice to send out two nurses to the hospital. A long spell of work in Egypt followed, and in June last she had gone to Berlin to study German methods. Happily she had left before the war broke out, and was ready to take up the ambulance work. Hundreds of nurses have been interviewed by her, and she has appraised their qualifications with a rare sense of judgment, seeing the kind of post at once for which each one was best fitted.

A very important branch of the Red Cross work was the supply of stores and medical comforts. Most liberal gifts came from private individuals, as well as

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big grants from Queen Mary's Needlework Guild. But the total of such offerings did not outdo the wonderfully generous gifts from India and the Dominions overseas. Moreover, the offerings thus poured in were additional to the lavish generosity they were bestowing upon the contingents of men, who were coming to the battle-line. Up and down India, not only did the English community sew and work with as much enthusiasm as their sisters at home, but native ladies entered into the good work with equal energy. In Bombay the Parsee and Hindu ladies vied with one another in sending useful things ; in Calcutta the gifts were so many that the big premises of the Young Women's Christian Association were strained to their utmost to deal with them.

Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the Crown Colonies, sent in so much that two large warehouses in London had to be requisitioned to store them. From the United States, too, came most substantial help. In clothing alone, during the first six months, nearly 740,000 garments were received as gifts from various sources. About two-thirds of this total were distributed during the winter months, and with the expected heavy calls of the hospitals as soon as the Allies' advance is pushed on, more will be wanted. To meet them, the Queen at the beginning of April asked all her workers to devote themselves, until further requested, to the provision of night-shirts, pyjamas, dressing-gowns, bed linen, and all else that would be useful in the wards.

Then the Red Cross organization was an enormous purchaser of medical appliances. Disinfectants and chloroform, drugs and dressings, X-ray apparatus, and surgical appliances, bandages of all sorts, absorbent



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wool, waterproof sheeting, are only a few of the items bought on the most wholesale scale. Even anti-typhoid and anti-tetanic serums were purchased in greater quantities than would be believed. The Army Medical Department was well equipped with all hospital necessaries, but it was the voluntary hospitals in France, Belgium, and here, that made such big demands. And happily, through the liberality of all classes, it was never necessary to refuse a reasonable request for stores of any kind. In a single eventful fortnight, when the fighting to hold the road to Calais was very severe, stores to the value of £30,000 were sent out.

The motor ambulance has proved of enormous value in the present war, and in the conveyance of the wounded from a field dressing station to the clearing hospital. These have been provided from many sources—people have had ambulance carriages put on the chassis of their own private cars; many have been provided by different bodies. Lady Bushman and a few others, however, found the means to elicit widespread support by naming a number of ambulances and inviting all women of that baptismal name to subscribe for them. On the Queen's Coronation it may be recalled that all named Mary, or one of its variants, were asked to unite to make an offering to Her Majesty, and this proved sufficient to purchase all her Garter insignia, with specially fine diamonds, as well as leaving several thousands to be devoted to charitable objects. Of course, over the ambulances the Marys soon provided enough, though the Margarets, it is said, ran them closely. The Carolines called the Charleses to their support, and the Henriettas accepted help quite naturally from the Henrys.

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Later, the Young Women's Christian Association developed the idea in organizing girls' clubs. In each instance they first secured a well-known lady, as the Duchess of Marlborough (Consuelo), to ask all whose names began with C, or Lady Smith Dorrien (Olive) the O's, and appealed in that way to a yet wider circle. Thus did woman's wit find new excuses for a common endeavour to a worthy end.

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# CHAPTER XII

## HOSPITALS AT HOME

**A changed base of plans—The territorial hospitals—A vast auxiliary—A patient's tribute—The Duchess of Bedford's hospital—Some who helped—The Canadian Red Cross.**

A LONG chapter in the history of the war, when it can fully be written, will be needed to record the adequate provision of hospitals to receive the sick and the wounded. Woman's help looms large in that work. For a winter of hostilities on a long-drawn-out front, when the actions were, from a military point of view, merely "local," altered very materially the whole preconceived system of hospital accommodation. The military hospitals and the twenty-three general territorial hospitals had been the base of all calculations when the war began. They were to be supplemented by reserves of beds in the chief civilian hospitals, and the smaller hospitals accepted through the Red Cross Society and organized by the Voluntary Aid Detachments, these providing as is shown elsewhere for nearly 20,000 beds.

Under normal peace conditions the military hospitals are sufficient for the needs of the Army. But, of course, at the chief centres of training, as Aldershot, Salisbury Plain, Portsmouth, and elsewhere, the



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enormously increased numbers of the New Army threw a far greater strain upon them, as there was inevitably an appreciable percentage of accidents, casualties, and illness. Moreover, as the strength of our armies in the various fields increased, with more and more men called up at home, the need grew ever more serious.

Netley, when taxed to its utmost during the South African War, accommodated 1700. Through the British Red Cross Society a number of huts have been added providing for another 500 patients, having a staff of 60 nurses and a number of Voluntary Aid members. At the Herbert Hospital, Woolwich, the second largest military hospital in the Kingdom, 700 is the ordinary number of beds, but this again has been largely increased. Queen Alexandra's Hospital at Milbank is comparatively small. At the general hospitals in London and the chief provincial towns the War Office retains a number of beds—so, too, in some of the special hospitals, as those dealing with the eyes, throat, ears, heart, and feet.

Looking well ahead, and realizing that great as the provision appeared it was likely to be far from sufficient, the Army Council decided upon establishing a number of vast auxiliary military hospitals. Among these, of course, were the territorial hospitals, which had mobilized so swiftly and efficiently on the outbreak of war, and, ever since the men began to be sent home, have been doing invaluable service. Their nursing has been particularly efficient, for their whole scheme was thought out in the quiet days of peace. Many of their matrons and sisters availed themselves of a privilege gladly accorded them of working for a time in a military hospital; while Miss Sidney Browne,

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the Matron-in-Chief, has had experience, unique in its extent, of the different phases of the work.

To attempt to describe the territorial general hospitals would merely be tedious. London has four of them—No. 1, entirely staffed from St. Bartholomew's Hospital, at St. Gabriel's College, Camberwell; No. 2, at St. Mark's College, Chelsea, with a staff from Guy's, St. Thomas's, and the London Hospitals; No. 3, at the Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum, Wandsworth, drawing the staff from the Middlesex, St. Mary's, and University College Hospitals; and No. 4, at the splendid new buildings of King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, deriving the staff from King's College, the Westminster, the Charing Cross, and St. George's Hospitals. All these provide for 520 beds in their original scheme. By the beginning of May, however, this had been vastly extended. Some were being reorganized to contain 2000 beds, and in one or two exceptional instances the idea of 3000 was even entertained. Naturally, the demands for nurses increased, until the Territorial Nursing Service became the largest body of all the separate contingents entrusted with the care of the wounded men. Even before these hospitals were fully occupied it had reached a total of 3000 members. Of these, some 276 were sent for a time to help the Regular Army and its Reserve on the Continent, and they won high praise from the doctors as well as from the leading medical papers.

The civil hospitals and private nursing institutions of repute collaborated gladly with the War Office in meeting as far as possible the vast requirements that arose, for it was understood that every trained woman would be wanted. The *Lancet*, in a fine tribute to their work, said: "The self-denying devotion of the

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nurses to their country should be realized and their posts should be kept open for all who are working in the military hospitals. In some cases nurses of all ranks are working at a loss to themselves, but this they gladly suffer, knowing that they do a noble work and that the need for their services is very great."

No fewer than eleven of the County Asylums for the insane have been requisitioned as buildings for these auxiliary hospitals. Local authorities have met the War Office as far as possible and have made mutual readjustments of existing arrangements by which the afflicted former inmates will be placed in other asylums or in private establishments temporarily, and in this way something like 15,000 beds can be provided. Buildings, too, that had been vacated, and would have been pulled down in big schemes of improvement, have also been requisitioned, as in the case of the Holborn Infirmary, which has been assigned to Dr. Louisa Garrett Anderson and Dr. Flora Murray for the auxiliary hospital to be under the entire control of medical women. The Metropolitan Asylums Board has given over the Lewisham Infirmary, the Brook Hospital, Shooter's Hill, and the Orchard Hospital, Dartford, for the same purpose.

By far the largest of these new auxiliaries in London is that which has taken over the huge buildings in Stamford Street, that in due course will be used as the Government Stationery Department. Something like 1650 beds will be contained within its walls, and for a scale of comparison it may be mentioned that the London, the largest general hospital in the Kingdom, can only receive 922 in-patients. At this new King George Hospital they estimate their floor space by the acre, each storey covering about an acre and a half.

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As there are five floors, this represents quite a respectable " small holding."

The nursing organization of so vast an enterprise has meant most careful thinking out. Miss M. E. Davies has been appointed matron, bringing to her post the advantage of nursing experience at the Herbert Hospital at Woolwich, and work as principal matron in the Territorial Nursing Service. Her staff consists of three principal sisters, ten senior sisters, 228 nurses, and 70 women orderlies from Voluntary Aid Detachments, while a certain number of trained male orderlies will also be available.

One of the principal sisters will act as Miss Davies' assistant, another will be home sister, and on the third will devolve the huge responsibilities of the housekeeping for the medical and nursing staff. Of the ten senior sisters, there will be two on each floor—one for the day and one for the night duties. Each floor has space for about 350 beds, but the task of supervising is made the easier by the fact that all are on one level and there will be no going up and down stairs to the separate wards.

No ward sister will have less than 59 beds to be responsible for, and one ward will contain over 90 beds. There will also be three theatre sisters for the surgical operations. Nearly all the senior sisters belong to Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Service or its Reserve, or have had experience in Army hospitals, while the ward sisters have also seen some service of the kind. The women orderlies will do the work of ward-maids and probationers as they may be directed, but the washing up will be done at a central scullery. A strict scheme of hours on and off duty has been laid down, for without the utmost order and punctuality

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confusion would soon creep in, while the satisfactory working of so vast a nursing staff will constitute a priceless tribute to women's sense of discipline and all that the work implies.

But many other hospitals also are on a large scale. The experiences of nurses getting ready their wards and of tending the men as they are brought in we have heard. Here is the other side of the subject as described by a patient himself, who tells first of the completeness of one of these Base Hospitals at home: "... a town in itself, 1200 beds, nearly 200 nurses, with medical staff, R.A.M.C. detachments, operating theatre, receiving rooms, post and telegraph offices, all complete. Electric light, baths, washhouses, incinerators have all been installed, and with the twenty long wards each of 60 beds cover a space of something like six acres."

It was a hospital in which open air played a big part, and the patients could have as many blankets and hot-water bottles as they pleased, but the sergeant in charge was wont to explain to any officers sent there: "For the nurses it's been cruel cold, especially at night; one of them is always in each ward, all the time, sort of sentry-go. And then there's all the dressings and dabbling in cold water!"

Some terrible cases were brought in to this particular hospital, but, the more difficult they were, the greater the zeal of the nurses. One man's wounds in the head seemed hopeless; yet when the night nurse succeeded in making him take a little bread and milk, and the day nurse coaxed him to try some beef tea, the doctors took another view. Some arrivals from Neuve Chapelle came in within forty-eight hours of that fierce struggle, and at midnight the nurses were hard at work dealing with the appallingly injured men. Even then they

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could not but glance round and express satisfaction at the pleasant and cheery surroundings to which they had come.

"Soon," said the observer, who had been through it before, "they will be bathed and fed, their dressings changed, and themselves comfortably settled and warm—and later the sun will stream in on them and they will awake to peace and rest and the care of the best surgeons in the world." Could testimony be more emphatic?

All this rearrangement has of course involved an enormous amount of detailed work in reapportioning the nurses. As the Red Cross Hospitals were closed down in France from the end of March onward, every available nurse was recalled and was registered for future service. Obstacles and discouragement were encountered by any nurses desirous of going to work in either of the Allies' countries after two or three hospital units had left for Serbia. Indeed, a little party who were going to join the French Flag Corps were somewhat peremptorily stopped at the station and requested instead to go and report themselves to the British Red Cross Society. Subsequently, they were permitted to leave England, but the incident was enough to show that the Army Medical Department realized how great would be the need of nurses.

Included among the 724 civil, auxiliary, private, and voluntary aid hospitals up and down the land are many that have been entirely organized by well-known women. As perfect, perhaps, as any, and interesting because all the details were planned by herself, is that maintained at Woburn Abbey by the Duchess of Bedford, who, when the offer of her yacht could not be accepted, set herself to see what she could do at Woburn

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Abbey for the wounded. Here there was a spacious riding school and covered tennis court which she thought would lend themselves to adaptation, as they were light and well ventilated.

First to be planned was a reception room for patients, which was to be equipped with cupboards for any clothing worth preserving. Beyond this a bathroom was constructed, and a detail that showed womanly thought was the provision of numbered bags, into which the garments thrown off could be placed to be taken away for washing. A capital recreation room with a piano is another feature.

The riding-school itself has been divided into one large ward of thirty beds and another of six beds. All have the latest comforts in spring mattresses, sanitary glass fittings, bed tables, and all that could help to recovery. Beautiful flowers come in fresh every day, and perhaps the luxury of all to men back from the devastation of war is the quiet of perfect English landscape. The nursing is done by fully qualified women, and an exceptionally skilful cook has unlimited resources of the best food.

Other women who have provided hospitals which were occupied as some occasion arose are Lady Wantage at Wantage, Lady Falmouth at Penzance, Cornelia Lady Wimborne at Poole, Lady Lees at South Lytchett, Dorsetshire, the Hon. Mrs. Charles White at Farnborough Court, Lady Rosemary Portal at Kingsclere House, Lady Emma Crichton at Highfield Hall, Southampton, the Countess of Normanton at Somerley House, Ringwood, the Countess of Portsmouth at Hurstbourne Park, Lady Mond at Melchet Court, Romsey, the Countess of Carnarvon at Highclere Castle, the Duchess of Rutland at Belvoir Castle, the

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Countess of Yarborough at Brocklesby Hall, the Dowager Countess of Leicester at Swaffham, Lady Battersea at Overstrand, Lady Ampthill at Wellingborough, Viscountess Howick at Lesbury, Lady Jane Lindsay at Abingdon, the Countess of Kingston at Oakham, the Hon. Mrs. Frederick Guest also at Oakham, Lady Kathleen Thynne at Frome, Countess Waldegrave at Midsomer Norton, Mary, Duchess of Hamilton, at Easton Park, Lady Rowley at Guildford, the Hon. Mrs. John Ward at Reigate, Lady Willoughby de Broke at Kineton, the Countess of Pembroke at Salisbury, the Countess of Suffolk at Malmesbury, Lady Georgina Vernon at Droitwich, Viscountess Downe at Wickham Abbey, Lady Holden at Ginsborough, Lady Beresford Peirse at Bedale, and Lady Bell at Northallerton, and the duties of maintaining such hospitals are not evaded by those who have assumed them. They have been undertaken with the fixed purpose of giving the best skill and care to the men who have obeyed so willingly and cheerfully their country's call.

Another aspect of hospital work here has been that of providing for the sick and wounded of the contingents from overseas. As regards the care of the Indian troops, racial prejudices have limited the part that women have taken in it, and at Brighton, where the Pavilion has been given over for the reception of the men, male orderlies alone have been employed. At Brockenhurst, however, where the name, ever to be honoured throughout India, of the late Lady Hardinge, whose gentle sympathy and kindness endeared her to all, has been conferred on the hospital, a matron and nursing staff have been appointed. Miss Edith M'Call Anderson, R.R.C., fills the chief position, with two assistants and seventeen sisters, all of whom have

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experience in Eastern hospitals and speak Hindustani. Their work is chiefly supervisory, for the hospital is a large one; and each sister has two wards of 25 beds under her charge. The whole hospital, however, is very largely a feminine undertaking, as it was chiefly organized by the Indian Soldiers Branch of the Ladies' Committee of the Order of St. John, while it was a lady, Mrs. Morant, who has given the site, and Lady Rothschild has been among its most substantial benefactors.

Canada sent complete medical organization with the troops who came forward so readily to the aid of the Mother Country. It included very highly trained nurses, for the standard of the Dominion in this direction is exceedingly good; and in the quest for nurses for the auxiliary hospitals official intimation went out that their collaboration in that direction would be welcome. During the winter there were four Canadian hospitals in France, and in April three more were provided by the M'Gill University, Montreal, the University of Toronto, and the Laval University of Quebec respectively, two of which were stationed at Boulogne and another rather farther north.

The Canadian Red Cross Society equipped a small but most perfect hospital, for which Mr. Waldorf Astor lent the light and airy covered tennis court at Cliveden. By permission it had the title of "The Duchess of Connaught's Canadian Red Cross Hospital"; while the women of the Dominion not only supplied it liberally with all the necessities as the bed linen, the bandages, and regular stores, but with a kindly sense of what their men-folk would really appreciate after all their hardships and privations in the battle zone, took care to send at regular intervals barrels of most attractive apples, and the jams, biscuits, and pickles

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to which they were accustomed at home. It was a little attention that brought cheer and comfort, and a feeling that they were being remembered by their friends in their sufferings as well as in their brave deeds.

The nursing staff arrived before the hospital was in working order, and for the first few months the matron, Miss Campbell, was at Boulogne in one of the English hospitals. All the nurses had had a full three years' training and much hospital experience beyond that. Hence the recoveries here were rapid, and the value of the hospital was so efficiently shown that an increase from its original 106 beds up to 550 was asked for. The extra accommodation was provided in huts. The tennis court itself possesses a gallery, and in this the matron's office was placed, giving her in an exceptional manner an oversight into her wards below divided by woodwork into four large departments. The matron herself enjoyed the rank equivalent to that of Captain, while the sisters are graded as Lieutenants. There are rather distinctive military touches about some details of the uniform worn, while the cap worn in the wards follows almost exactly the regulation pattern of Queen Alexandra's Service.

Another Canadian Hospital has been provided by the Canadian War Contingent Association and the Freemasons of the Dominion. A fine house near Shorncliffe was lent as its locale by Sir Arthur and Lady Markham, and Her Majesty honoured the undertaking by permitting it to be called the Queen's Canadian Hospital. The matron here, Miss Amy MacMahon, is an interesting personality, as she has braved the rigours of Labrador in the course of her professional career, while she made an appeal to any Canadian nurses who might be in England at the time she was

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forming her staff to come forward and help her. By good fortune it happened that a considerable number were in this country, and she was able to bring together a very efficient group. The hospital was a useful one altogether, and its position near the Downs ensured of course the freshest of sea breezes.

The Canadian Red Cross Society, through which has come more assistance than is always realized, is a body of considerable importance. It is purely voluntary as to organization, but it is fully recognized by the State as a most valuable adjunct in many directions. By Act of Parliament it enjoys incorporation, and is officially called upon to render its reports at regular intervals to the Minister of Militia, who in the Dominion is the chief authority on military matters.

Quite early last autumn the Society deputed its Chief Commissioner, Colonel Hodgetts, to proceed to London in order to receive and place as intended the gifts which soon began to arrive in this country. Among these were the equipment for the hospital already mentioned at Taplow, a number of motor ambulance cars for the front, and an entire coach for Princess Christian's wonderful ambulance train. Comforts for the men, whether in the field or the hospital, came by tons and represented a really valuable form of help. Moreover, it did not confine its assistance to those from the Dominion, but entered into a most friendly collaboration with our own Red Cross Society, placing twelve of the ambulance cars at its disposal, while £2000 in money was given to the St. John Ambulance Society for a ward it was establishing in one of its hospitals primarily for Canadians.

No less ready or efficient was the help of Australia, though, owing to circumstances, we have not had the

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same opportunities of realizing it in this country. In spite of rigid censorship there is good reason to believe that there was an excellent hospital service with the troops from the Commonwealth, who were landed in Egypt to meet the Turkish attack, and that the nursing staff of 160 members was admirably efficient. In addition, however, to this there was an Australian hospital at Wimereux providing for about 200 patients, and this won high praise from the Army Medical authorities for good management and general standard of skill and care.

A convalescent home at Harefield Park, Uxbridge, was arranged by Mr. B. Leake with friends sent from Australia, and the medical and nursing staff of this came also from the Commonwealth. The matron of this home, Miss Gray, had been the matron of the hospital at Perth, Western Australia, and the four who are with her hold the highest certificates as to proficiency, for in the Commonwealth as in Canada the real professional hall-mark is not lightly won.

The smaller hospitals of the Voluntary Aid Detachments are to be largely used as convalescent homes. Over and beyond these, however, the Red Cross Society after inspection passed on to the military commands of each district a large number of the offers of suitable houses for this purpose. For officers a charming house at Parkstone was lent by Sir Ernest Cassel, and King Manoel undertook the maintenance of another house at Brighton, given for this purpose by Admiral Sir Hedworth and Lady Meux. For cases of lung trouble a house is being maintained at St. Moritz, while accommodation is retained at Wengen for a certain number of special cases.

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# CHAPTER XIII

## HELPING THE CHILDREN

**Playing at soldiers and nurses—How the separation allowances benefited—Schools for mothers—Aid for education.**

SOME of us have heard of the worthy lady who was wont to urge at meetings and elsewhere that the first step towards bringing about the era of universal peace would be to abolish the toy soldiers from the nursery play-box. Ideas not much less visionary seemed to obsess a few as regards the way in which children should be allowed to learn anything regarding the war; and teachers have exercised themselves how they shall make plain the difference between militarism and National Service; how, when telling the truth about the enemy and all his barbarous methods, they may not overstep the bounds of justice.

But the youngsters in the early days of the war saw and heard quite enough to form their own views. The little parties of small boys who constructed wonderful caps and putties out of newspaper contents bills, and who with a penny whistle and an empty tin for a drum marched about the streets in the autumn, were expressing their patriotism in their own way. To fight battles, however, was not so easy. No one would



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be the Kaiser or the Crown Prince or the Uhlans save as a punishment. There are whispers that the girls were compelled to fill these unpopular parts, but that of course, from the youthful male point of view, would be as unsatisfactory as cricket with only sisters to bowl at you. Hence, the war game proved more difficult than those of older growth fully realized.

Perhaps the girls were able better to adapt themselves to the reproduction of current interests. They turned their dolls' houses into hospitals, and the doll that was chiefly in demand at Christmas wore a nurse's uniform with conspicuous Red Crosses. They, too, could knit scarves, laboriously, patiently, even as their mothers and their aunts could make them. At school, even the smallest of them had her own share in whatever scheme of good works had been adopted. And it was a very tiny mite indeed who propounded what she thought would be an adequate punishment for the Huns and barbarians, when she said, as the most dreadful fate she could imagine, that " the Germans should all be put in the coal cellar, and then some nasty mice and some horrid big spiders should be put in there with them ! "

Of course the Government scale of separation allowances to soldiers' wives took all due cognizance of the children, and it was perhaps for this reason that less special effort on their behalf proved to be necessary than at one time seemed possible. The public elementary schools went on in their normal course, with rather a larger proportion of women as teachers. Very little distress had to be faced, and the feeding of the necessitous little ones was found a less urgent problem than it has been in winters when trade was bad and labour in small demand. Indeed it was sus-

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pended by the regular organizations for the work, but here and there a need existed which was excellently met in Hammersmith and the poorer neighbourhood off Portobello Road by the Friends of the Poor. The *Queen* newspaper gave specially warm support to the movement and from its readers secured liberal and useful gifts of rabbits, vegetables, and groceries, with which necessitous children could be provided with capital and satisfying dinners for a penny. The work was further helped by the London Chamber of Commerce, which repeatedly sent carcases of chilled mutton. With such aid a number of old-age pensioners could also be assisted. There was no expensive upkeep of halls or rooms, for the youngsters brought their own basins or plates and took their food away to eat at home, and no fewer than 150,000 meals were thus supplied.

Christmas saw no falling off in the pleasant treats organized by kindly people for the youngsters, and these in fact were, in many cases, on a scale of generosity greater than usual, as it was felt that to give happiness to the little sons and daughters of the brave men in the trenches was a tribute that the men would keenly appreciate.

There was one aspect of care for the children that wise and far-seeing women realized had never had so national an importance. The necessity for conserving every little life that was born was recognized to the full, and the result was an immense expansion of the movement for providing schools for mothers and baby clinics. For the last two years or so, these had been doing excellent work, of which the Queen had repeatedly shown her approval. Some of the large provincial towns were ahead even of the Metropolis in

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this direction, as, for example, at Bradford, where, in connection with a small maternity hospital of nine beds, an ante-natal clinic had been established as well as a " babies' welcome," in which hundreds of infants are cared for annually.

In London and the large centres generally there was no great difficulty in extending such work. The case in the country and in scattered rural districts was, however, quite different, though even here a beginning has been made, which was described by the Hon. Mrs. Bernard James at a special conference on this subject convened by the National Union of Women Workers in the spring. Some fifteen counties, she was able to announce, had adopted a useful scheme to this end, while voluntary workers were supplementing it by providing a " welcome " to which the babies could be brought at intervals to be inspected and weighed; while, in some cases, this afternoon could be made a pleasant little social occasion of tea and talk between the mothers and the visiting nurse. This form of work has assuredly been looked upon far more seriously since the war began, and the baby born in these months has better chances of being duly cared for, and growing up with sound and healthy body, than it would have had even during the summer of 1914.

The children's hospitals also opened their doors more widely than ever to suffering childhood. The medical and nursing staffs had often been reduced owing to the insistent calls from the front for such assistance, but those that remained worked with redoubled energy, doing their utmost when they knew the anxiety of a poor mother with her husband in the battle-line and the little one going through the grim struggle against illness or disease. And who shall

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say how often the skill and devotion that was brought to the little sufferer's help conquered the insidious foe? Never, in fact, were the claims of the cripple, the stricken, or the afflicted boy or girl more forcibly or eloquently urged than by Countess Ferrers, Lady Jellicoe, and Bishop Boyd Carpenter on behalf of the Invalid Children's Aid Association.

It is a long record of helpfulness that the Professional Classes Relief Committee can point to, and the fact that the Queen bestowed upon it no less than £500 of the sum placed by the wives of the Freemasons of the Empire in her hands to be devoted at her discretion to those in these ranks is proof enough of wise administration. In no direction, however, has it done more valuable service than in assisting parents to continue the education of their boys and girls. In the home, none shrank from doing her own domestic work and coming down to the plainest of fare; but the prospect of having to take a bright and promising boy from the school where he was doing so well, or of interrupting a girl's course of study, brought fear and grief to many parental hearts. They would not have dreamed of asking for anything for themselves, and would have borne the privation due to the cessation of their work in the arts or sciences without letting the world hear of them.

But the whole future of the children was at stake. Very quietly and tactfully have Mrs. Gotto and her special sub-committee for this aspect of the Fund's efforts fulfilled their duty. Fees have been paid, schools have been found for children showing signs of some exceptional gift. The necessary training that would fit a girl quickly to take up some of the occupations now calling aloud for workers has been given.

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Moreover, the profession of teaching might well have suffered itself through a widespread withdrawal of pupils. With a central Fund such as this is, it has been possible to distribute money more widely than could have been done otherwise.

There has also been the very useful work fulfilled by the Officers' Families Fund, in which the Marchioness of Lansdowne has borne so active a part. The pay of the naval or military officer has never been liberal, and in the sudden exigencies that have arisen in these last months there has often been the need for some prompt help accorded with that gentle sympathy and avoidance of anything that could raise difficulties either in asking or accepting the timely aid. Those who have ministered in this way have truly been Ladies of Grace, whose fine insight and tender consideration have been unerringly exercised.

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# CHAPTER XIV

## THE INDUSTRIAL SITUATION

**The Women's Emergency Corps—Toy-making—Call for help in supplying munitions of war—Trade Unions' attitude—Some curious results—Civil Service openings—The munitions of war—Woman's opportunity.**

CERTAIN developments that the War brought about were not foreseen by any of those prophets who based their calculations on the experiences of the past. In the first weeks of hostilities we had the gloomiest of predictions as to closed sources of supply, famine prices of all the essentials of life, and unemployment in all trades. After nine months of fighting we realize that all the highways of sea-borne commerce are open, that we are paying less for our commodities in daily consumption than the most optimistic of economists would have deemed possible, and that the difficulty is not to find employment, but to get the workers.

In those early days, assuredly the outlook for the woman worker appeared very dark. The cotton operatives of Lancashire were on short time, and it looked as though a further stoppage was probable. Other trades in which women were extensively employed were affected, as they always are, by the far-reaching influence of the great cotton industry of the



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country, second only in importance to that of agriculture. The leaders of the Women's Trade Union Movement viewed the situation as seriously as any. It seemed in the narrower outlook of those days that the general cessation of anything like extravagance in dress would be reflected in depression and stagnation of the whole textile interests of the country.

There was no lack of excellent and well-meaning voluntary effort at once to take stock of the position and to endeavour to find posts that displaced women could fill. The organizations that had existed to promote women's suffrage, whether by peaceful or by violent measures, promptly saw that this was no time to pursue the controversy, and while the Government very properly released from prison all those convicted of damage to property in the furtherance of their cause, the leaders of all the groups working to this end applied themselves to the practical wants of the hour.

The most important perhaps of these enterprises was the formation of the Women's Emergency Corps. It was realized by the executive committee that any such organization would have to be sufficiently elastic to meet contingencies as yet unimagined, and they avoided in their scheme a great deal of the formality and red tape usually brought into such ventures. The Duchess of Marlborough was Honorary Treasurer, the chair of the Council was assigned to Dr. Christine Murrell; Mrs. Percy Boulnois and Miss Clapham, whose connection with the Labour Exchanges would be specially helpful, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, Miss Lena Ashwell, Lady Aberconway, Lady Cowdray, the Marchioness of Londonderry, the Hon. Mrs. Haverfield, the Hon. Mrs. Norman Grosvenor, and Mrs. Price Hughes were all associated with the work.

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Two or three public meetings were held, and as showing how widespread was the desire first to be helpful and second to establish some safeguard against total loss of occupation, over 10,000 names were registered within the first week or so. Among these were medical women, nurses, dispensers, teachers, governesses, actresses, musicians, artists, typists, clerks, and shop-assistants. Others wished to be employed as motor-drivers, and had a yearning apparently to be engaged on the various public vehicles. Not a few offered themselves to work the lifts in stores, offices, and hotels, or to be employed as ticket collectors or booking clerks. The unregenerate were inclined to ridicule such proposals; and the stern utilitarian to hint grave objections on the part of Trade Unions. But after six months of war, when more and more of the manhood of the country had been absorbed into the New Army, great businesses were glad to put their lifts into the charge of well-mannered young women, and railway companies were also placing women in many unexpected positions.

Perhaps the work of most lasting value that the corps achieved was that of opening up a new industry in toy-making. This country will never produce the cheap playthings that came in the past from the sweated labour of Germany and Austria, but there is a steady demand for things better than those, and it is in this direction that it has given a most useful lead. Viscount Portman placed a building of some historic interest at the disposal of the Committee in the disused Chapel of the Annunciation built by French Huguenot refugees, and within whose walls some of the most eloquent of French preachers have been heard.

Here, over 100 girls were constantly employed

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during the winter, and teachers were trained who can impart their knowledge to small village industries. Altogether the Corps has filled a very useful place, even if some of its initial ambitions were not wholly realized.

Long before this, however, the astonishing thing had happened. Trade had recovered itself beyond the wildest of dreams. In the West Riding of Yorkshire, what will be known in its future history as "the khaki boom" had begun. Every loom that could be adapted to the making of this cloth was running at full time; in some factories, indeed, work was carried on all night, and it is said that for some weeks the only stoppage made was to oil and attend to the machinery. Khaki was being turned out on a scale that the Colne Valley estimated not in pieces but in miles. The women as well as the men in Huddersfield and Dewsbury, Rochdale, and Halifax were employed throughout the winter, and instead of the spectre of want, there was prosperity abounding and exceptional.

For it was not only the British Forces on sea, on land, and in training who had to be supplied. The whole male population of France between the ages of eighteen and forty-five was on active service, and the textile industry was at a standstill. Russia, hitherto a manufacturing country only to a limited extent, was totally unprepared with supplies for the rapid increase of the army she was placing in the field. Both France and Russia, therefore, turned to our country for enormous supplies. Contracts for boots were placed in the Midlands for millions of pairs. Leeds made 40,000 pairs of Army boots a week for months. How many yards of blue-grey cloth Yorkshire supplied

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to France can only be a matter of guessing, when a single house in Manchester was called upon for a million yards of stout twill for the making of pockets alone. Even in those trades in which women were not employed this flood-tide of activity benefited them, for with husbands and fathers earning these high and regular wages they had more money to spend themselves on dress and additions to the house furniture, and these in turn called for women's labour. The liberal scale of separation allowances to the soldiers' wives also permitted of a more generous scale of expenditure, as the drapers' shops in the garrison towns or wherever these women were to be found in considerable numbers, soon showed.

All the while, recruiting was steadily going on, but it was not until the spring was with us that the real shortage of labour was quite understood. Naturally it was on the land that it first became urgent, and farmers found that they could only command the services of the men well over middle age, and those who in the south-west are known as "good hard bwoys." But education in the last forty years or so has not encouraged women to turn their attention to work on the land. Some of the older women can tell how their mothers recalled the terrible days when the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury stirred public opinion against the employment of girls in agricultural gangs, and did not hesitate indeed to say that the extensive employment of women and girls had done more to degrade women and lower the rate of agricultural wages than any other cause. Since then the daughters of the soil have long preferred domestic service, the work of the shops, and such indoor vocations. Few, therefore, there were who could come forward save for

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such simple work as putting through the cutting machine turnips for the sheep.

The dairy work was rather different. Of late years there has been something of a revival of this as an occupation for women, and each year the Dairy Show at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, brings up a hundred or more of girls, who compete in milking and butter-making for a valuable cup and certificates, which are of great use when seeking situations in large dairies. Whatever, in fact, women could do on a farm was perforce utilized, in order to allow such men as could to plough a straight furrow or take the harrows over the land prior to the sowing of the oats, barley, or wheat.

Meantime, many trades were suffering from a scarcity of labour. The question of the munitions in shell of all calibres and cartridges was urgent, and until there was ample for Sir John French's demands for the Army in France, the great advance could not begin. Then it was that the Government somewhat tardily realized that there might be among the women of the country such a reserve of workers that they could materially help the situation. On March 17, a well-printed appeal came into all the newspaper offices, and was widely distributed through other channels. This was the form in which it ran :

## WAR SERVICE FOR WOMEN

The President of the Board of Trade wishes to call attention to the fact that in the present emergency, if the full fighting power of the Nation is to be put forth on the field of battle, the full working power of the Nation must be made available to carry on its essential trades at home. Already, in

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certain important occupations there are not enough men and women to do the work. This shortage will certainly spread to other occupations as more and more men join the fighting forces.

In order to meet both the present and the future needs of national industry during the war, the Government wish to obtain particulars of the women available, with or without previous training, for paid employment. Accordingly, they invite all women who are prepared, if needed, to take paid employment of any kind—industrial, agricultural, clerical, etc.—to enter themselves upon the Register of Women for War Service which is being prepared by the Board of Trade Labour Exchanges.

Any woman living in a town where there is a Labour Exchange can register by going there in person. If she is not near a Labour Exchange she can get a form of registration from the Local Agency of the Unemployment Fund. Forms will also be sent out through a number of women's societies, and can be obtained by post from the General Manager, Board of Trade Labour Exchanges, at the address below.

The object of registration is to find out what reserve force of women's labour, trained or untrained, can be made available if required. As from time to time actual openings for employment present themselves, notice will be given through the Labour Exchanges, with full details as to the nature of work, conditions and pay, and, so far as special training is necessary, arrangements will, if possible, be made for the purpose.

Any woman who by working helps to release a man or to equip a man for fighting does national

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war service. Every woman should register who is able and willing to take employment.

BOARD OF TRADE,
QUEEN ANNE'S CHAMBERS, BROADWAY,
WESTMINSTER, S.W., *March* 1915.

Any woman who wished to register was given a form asking full details as to her name, address, and age; whether married or single; whether she had previously done any paid work or not; whether she was prepared to give her whole time, part time, or to go where directed, provided that the conditions of housing and pay were satisfactory; if she had not done any work before, what she thought herself most suited for and if she could consent to be trained; and in the event of choosing work on the land, whether she could undertake milking, dairy work, the care of live stock, light farm work, market gardening, ordinary gardening, or poultry farming. The general statement as to the immediate requirements of the State in these directions issued as part of the form was:

## WAR SERVICE FOR WOMEN

Are you able to work and free to work but not working?

You should have your name entered at once on the Special Register of Women for War Service which is being prepared by the Government Labour Exchanges.

Women are wanted at once to work in the following (among other) occupations:—

Farm Work. Brush Making. Dairy Work.
Clothing Machining. Leather Stitching.
Light Machining for Armament.

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But even if you have no special experience of any of this work, you should register. It may be possible to train you. It is certain that as more men join the forces, more women will be wanted to work while they are away. Even if you can work only half of each day, you may be useful.

You can register either by going to a Labour Exchange, or by filling up the form on the back of this, and posting it to the nearest Labour Exchange. If you do not know where the Exchange is you can post the form to the Central Office for Labour Exchanges and Unemployment Insurance, Queen Anne's Chambers, Broadway, S.W. No fees are charged.

**Any woman who by working helps to release a man or equip a man for fighting does national War Service. Every woman who can work and is free to work should come forward.**

BOARD OF TRADE, *March* 1915.

The appeal aroused immediate attention and interest. All the leading political organizations, as the Primrose League and the Women's Liberal Federation, sent out notices to all their branches calling upon them to bring the appeal to the notice of their members. The National Union of Women Workers affiliating as it does some 300 societies concerned with philanthropic and social efforts for women, gave it special consideration. Mrs. Creighton, the President, pointing out the exceptional opportunity that girls of education and leisure had in it to learn the real conditions of life and labour in large factories—the opportunity indeed that might be of untold value later on in the readjustment of many economic questions that will follow the War.

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Equally, the societies for the advocacy of women's suffrage brought the matter directly to the notice of their members.

Just a month after the call had been made for this service, Mr. Runciman received at the Board of Trade a highly representative deputation from the chief organized bodies of women including not only the voluntary societies but trade unions and co-operative guilds. They had come to lay before him various points such as equal wages with men for equal work, the question of housing accommodation—a matter of great importance to those offering to work on the land,—and the rate to be paid for maintenance while learning any trade. In the course of his address to the delegates, Mr. Runciman mentioned that in round figures the numbers who in this first four weeks had registered were 33,000, thus classified:

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|---|---|
| Armament workers | 6000 |
| Clothing trades | 4000 |
| Milkmaids and dairy workers | 1700 |
| Gardeners | 500 |
| Other agricultural workers | 2000 |
| Shop-assistants | 1100 |
| Leather workers | 500 |
| Commercial and clerical | 5000 |

By the end of April the number had reached 60,000 and about the same ratio of preferences was maintained.

Had the real patriotism of women been measured by that response it would have been a very disappointing result. But the mistake that was made was that of utilizing the Labour Exchanges alone as the machinery for creating the register. The poorer working women knew only too well of one and another who had sought employment through them, who had been received

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with chilling formality by clerks who thought a touch of human friendliness and sympathy quite over and beyond anything they were paid to provide, and who had waited in despair for work that never came. They knew already that there were long lists who had applied, though they had not the official figures that in spite of the activities of many industries there were then between 50,000 and 60,000 for whom labour was still lacking.

The girl of the shop-assistant, clerk, or typist orders would never go to a Labour Exchange. Those still higher in the social rank equally would not seek to enter upon an experiment of this kind through those doors. No one wanted to be critical when the call was first made, but there is little doubt that, if a strong committee of well-known ladies including representatives of the societies concerned with feminine welfare and those connected with the Trade Unions of women had been called together to organize those ready to render such service, a great deal more enthusiasm might easily have been awakened.

In the earlier months of the War there was a certain amount of glib and unconsidered talk about putting women into places filled by men, whether as motor omnibus drivers or grocers' assistants, as signallers on the railways, or as clerks in banks and business houses. It was just the facile solution of problems that the unthinking put forward regardless of economic questions or Trade Union principles involved. But as men rallied more and more to the call, and labour was more and more needed, some of these latter organizations faced the position squarely and gave a good lead on the subject. There was a certain huge factory in East London which had vast contracts to supply jams,



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marmalades, and other provisions in tins for the troops. Some of the work of hermetically closing the tins by machinery had always been done by men, and when these went away into training while others could not be found to fill their places, the suggestion was tentatively put forward as to how far the remaining men, who were over military age, might accept women's collaboration. To their credit they expressed their complete readiness to do it, on the strict understanding that any women who might be thus engaged should receive the full Union rates of wages.

The Amalgamated Society of Engineers devoted considerable discussion to the subject, especially as far as the production of shell and other munitions of war were concerned. Ultimately they agreed that operations on which skilled men are at present employed, but which, by reason of their character, can be performed by semi-skilled or female labour, may be done by such during the War period. Where semi-skilled or female labour is employed in place of skilled labour, the rates paid should be the usual rates of the district obtaining for the operations performed.

It was, however, stipulated that any federated employer shall at the conclusion of the War, unless the Government notify that the emergency continues, reinstate the working conditions of his factory on the pre-War basis, and as far as possible afford re-employment to his men at present serving with His Majesty's Forces.

These proposals, it was further decided, shall not warrant any employer in making such arrangements as will effect a permanent restriction of employment in favour of semi-skilled men or female labour. Semi-skilled or female labour shall first be affected by any

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discharges either before or after the War period. The employers agree to take all possible steps to ensure the distribution of Government work throughout the kingdom, and this has been the attitude generally taken up by trades in which women have been more extensively employed.

A clear idea of the work that was being done by women in providing some of the munitions of war, was obtained through the favour of a special permission of the War Office, and the extreme courtesy of Messrs. Vickers, at their great works at Barrow-in-Furness. The full description appeared in *The Daily Telegraph*, and from this may be gathered, that, up to the beginning of the present year, the work of filling the shrapnel fourteen-pounder shell, and those of certain other calibres, had been done by lads. But, as the demands increased, first some 300 women and girls were taught the outlines of the work that would be required of them, and a great range of shops with machinery driven by electricity was quickly put up to accommodate from 800 to 1000 more.

The first operations of making a shell are done by men.

"Perhaps a foot of steel has been cut from the bar, about as thick as a man's arm, and from out a closed furnace, whose heat is felt though no fire is seen, the worker withdraws it, with tongs, a red, incandescent, glowing lump of metal. It is transferred into what seems a small cavity in a very solid base; another man gives a turn or two to a handle before him; there is a swift descent of more heavy metal, which is quickly raised again. The steel, still glowing, is lifted out, but it is now, roughly, a deep pot. Thus, it has been punched, and has passed the first stage, after which



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the ' drawing ' will give it more definite form, and the centreing will carry it yet further towards smoothness and shape.

" Before completion a shell goes through about twenty-four stages, and all these later processes are executed by women. Let it be said first that the machinery they are employing is the very last word in perfection and delicacy that can be imagined, and it would seem that automatic action could hardly be carried further. At the boring lathes the casings are being smoothed down, and the cuttings, like fine twisted silver ribbons, are being carried off through grooves corresponding with every revolution. Another type of machine gives the right lines to the conical-nosed casings, and elsewhere, outside and inside, turning is going on simultaneously.

" There is one group of machines that would seem to represent the ultimate science of inanimate action. They combine six different tools for successive stages of boring and turning, and are controlled by movements of one capstan-head. At one of them a slight, graceful girl was watching with keen intelligence and attention the now brightly-burnished steel casing as it moved forward to the final touches. Each process had been complete in itself, and she had known how to guide it.

" ' Is much strength necessary ? ' was the question one asked naturally, after seeing two or three cases passed through ; though, in truth, it was hardly called for, as the quick, easy movements of the small and shapely hands were answer enough. One of those concerned with the driving power of the department happened to hear the inquiry, and made reply, ' Not so much as for driving a light motor-car ; and that, as you know, many ladies do for their own pleasure.'

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" Another important phase of the work is giving the screw thread that is necessary for keeping the copper band in its position, which means so much in the actual discharging of the shell from the gun. These involve tests of extreme accuracy as to gauge, according to mathematically correct standards which are furnished. These, again, the women were applying, and rejections were very few. One girl smilingly mentioned that none of her threadings had been wrong for a couple of days ; another at a little distance admitted she had made a few mistakes. Then there is all the finished brass work of the fuses which they also do, the machinery employed being equally readily controlled. And a really memorable scene it was to look down this long gallery, with all the network overhead of the driving-bands, the steadily-accumulating and constantly-removed piles of steel and brass, touched sometimes by the sun to gleam of silver and gold ; and the women workers, quiet, ordered, disciplined, each knowing and doing her task ere another phase was reached.

" Here the women are putting in the bullets. There are deep boxes filled with them, about the size of small marbles, all so precisely the same as to weight and dimensions that when the charge is weighed every shell contains the same number. For the first time, too, one realised with a new and vivid sense that the phrase ' a hail of bullets ' must express with terrible truth what follows upon the bursting of a shell. The filling is quickly done, but there is the further work of pouring in about a pint of boiling resin, which keeps all fixed until the discharge. With the putting in of the explosive there is here no concern, but there is a soldering process done very quickly and deftly by the women, and the final polishing away of the superfluous

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lead. All these branches of the work are popular with the women, and the superintendent of the department considers that she has here, indeed, come to a haven where she would be, after the labours of which she has had full experience on the machines.

"The expert verdict as to their work is that they are performing it as well as the average lad. At first there is perhaps some slight want of confidence in regard to the machines, but all allowance is made for that, on the ground that the feminine mind is not so educated yet to the use of mechanism as is the masculine habit of thought. But they are growing more and more used to the work, and those now engaged will be the leaders and pioneers when the great extension of women's employment begins here, shortly.

"There are three minimum rates of pay, and there are bonuses of 50 per cent that can be earned on all these that bring the wages up to a scale that the London worker in many trades would look upon with longing envy. Three shifts of eight hours are worked, the women taking their night turn in rotation, 6 A.M. to 2 P.M., 2 P.M. to 10 P.M., and 10 P.M. to 6 A.M. are the divisions, and every third week each one works for the last-named hours. All while on duty wear a nice dark blue cotton overall with a lighter stripe, and a cap by no means unbecoming of the same material protects the hair from dust and metallic particles. These, as well as the thick leather gloves that are worn in handling the shells at their earlier and rougher stages, are provided by the firm.

"Another most interesting aspect of the women's work is that of shaping and sewing the covering and 'wings'—to employ a non-technical word—of aircraft. The great new aircraft shed contains some of

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the most jealously guarded secrets of the Royal Naval Service, but, with the same unfailing courtesy that was shown all through in regard to the women's work, a walk was permitted through the former aircraft shed of the firm where they are at work. It is a highly specialized form of industry as far as the sex is concerned, and the lady who is forewoman here learnt it originally in the Army workshop at Farnborough. She has proved herself extremely competent over it, and some of her suggestions have been of real practical help. According to the exigencies of the demand, from forty to sixty women are employed here.

"No workshop, surely, was ever so light and airy as this great place, where the sun was streaming in and creating a sense of daffodil-yellow everywhere. For yellow is the actual colour of the unmatchable fabric that is used—a fabric of cotton, to which Manchester devotes the finest of the raw material and its most skilful weaving to produce, giving a surface fine and soft to the touch as a dainty lawn pocket-handkerchief, yet from other things employed in conjunction with it as tenacious a material as can be devised. The sewing-machines have had to be specially constructed, with exceptional distance between the hand-wheel and the needle, to allow of the turning and manipulation of very large surfaces being attached to the metal supports.

"Plan tracing is no new feature for women in the Barrow works, and this gives employment to some hundreds of women of considerable education. Talking about them, there is pleasant commendation to be heard of the admirable exactitude they manifest, and the clearness and precision with which they put in minute details. They have dealt with the most secret points in the construction of submarines, and not the least

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striking testimony to their work has been the high sense of patriotic honour they have shown in never discussing outside any of the confidential matters with which they have been entrusted."

In some other vocations there was less welcome for women. The tramway and omnibus employés entered strong protests against their engagement as conductors, though the railway servants accepted them as ticket-collectors, and in some instances as booking clerks, while as carriage cleaners and sweepers they became quite extensively employed.

The intelligent collaboration of women in conserving as much as possible both the food supplies and reducing demands on labour was asked in a way that showed a new appreciation of the value of their help. From the Board of Trade came a circular directing attention generally to the reports of the central organizations concerned with the meat trade, and pointing out the desirability of reducing as far as possible the consumption of meat to avert a yet greater rise in prices. Both home and foreign killed beef and mutton had jumped to rates unknown to the present generation and housekeepers began to feel the heavy cost. A few days after the circular was issued there was an appreciable diminution in demands, indicating that the good sense of the women saw the need for economy and had less meat served.

A second appeal came through the Home Office. This urged upon women the necessity for consideration as to shopping. It pointed out that to shop early meant that the work of packing and sending out could be done by a smaller staff, and it urged upon customers the help they could give by carrying home their own smaller parcels. The thoughtful woman, however,

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did yet more. She ceased to demand that the butcher and fishmonger and greengrocer should send messengers to receive the day's orders and went out herself and gave them. Nor did the railway companies address themselves to unwilling listeners when they asked travellers, in view of depleted station staffs, to make their luggage as light as possible.

Thus all were serving women, in the fulness with which they took up the tasks to be carried through, the sacrifices to be made. Ten months of war have altered the perspective of every life. Vanity, pleasure, amusement, and all that the exaggerated cult of the worship of mere wealth did so much to foster can never again be the paramount influences that they had come to be. We can never know the full tale of the splendid heroism of our men, or how often lives were given, even as the Master gave His that others might be saved. We can never see, reduced to tables and figures, the inspirations, the deathless bravery of individual men no less than of companies, battalions, regiments, brigades, army corps, or ships. Who will ever forget the valiant signal of Captain Loxley when the *Formidable* was torpedoed, to a sister ship to "keep off" lest she should run risks of the same danger?

How much more of anxiety and of trial lies before us we cannot yet see. Of one thing, however, we are certain, and that is that the women who have come through the fiery ordeal of the unknown terrors in the early days of the war, and have risen to the fine sense of ministry that they have exercised, are prepared to give all their devotion, all their strength to whatever further calls the Empire yet makes to them.

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## CHAPTER XV

### THE COMPELLING MOTIVES

**A righteous war—Sacrifice—Prayer—Reward and consolation.**

THE preceding pages have shown with convincing clearness, assuredly, how amply and nobly the "serving women" of our land have justified the eagerness of their desire to minister, in the highest measure of their powers, to the needs and necessities of our nation at this crisis in our national destinies. Women have been anxious to show what they can do, very naturally and very properly. But that merely of itself would be a mean ambition and a very inadequate stimulus and inspiration for the labours they have undertaken and sustained during these times of stress. There is a deeper and a worthier explanation of the heroic activity of our sisters.

In the first place, they have shared to the full in the motives which are stimulating the whole of our compatriots, male and female, throughout the Empire to unprecedented endeavour and sacrifice. And what is the first of these motives? Is it not the profound and unshakeable conviction of the necessity and justice of this war? Is there in our nation any woman who would not from her heart accept the declaration of the Bishop of Durham: "I humbly but



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absolutely believe," wrote Dr. Handley Moule in *The Sunday at Home*, "it is not only a righteous war; it is a holy war. It is a fight not only for truth and honour but against bold and blasphemous contradictions of the ideals of the Lord Jesus Christ, contradictions embodied in treachery and violence on a gigantic scale."

What was clear to us at the beginning of the war has been made more clear, if that were possible, as the war proceeded. The Rev. T. A. Gurney, the well-known Vicar of St. Giles, Northampton, has well and forcibly expressed this fundamental aspect of the titanic world-conflict: "Every successive development reveals the war as a struggle between all that we as Christians hold to be sacred—national integrity and good faith, the rights of smaller, weaker nationalities, our political and religious liberties, the brotherhood of peoples, the coming of the kingdom of Christ and the supremacy of His ideals throughout the world —and a brute force, an idealisation of material power, an exaltation of intellect at the expense of conscience, an idolatry of martial valour, which are in the plainest sense anti-Christian."

In the second place, the appeal for sacrifice never falls upon deaf ears when it is addressed to the noble army of serving women. A true and striking thing was said by a native writer in an Indian periodical the other day. He pointed out that his countrymen were irresponsive to the argument that material success followed the adoption of Christianity. "If we were pleading for the acceptance of Christianity," he wrote, "we would lay stress rather on any larger, vaster opportunities of self-sacrifice and self-surrender in the pursuit of the Divine purpose, which it may open

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up to mankind. The rule of the religious mind is not what I shall get, but how much I shall give. The appeal of Calvary is worth immensely more than that of all the kingdoms and principalities of the world." It is the appeal of sacrifice that is answered readily by the hosts of true-hearted serving women. To woman, as Ella E. Walters writes, "self-sacrifice is the foundation, walls, and coping-stone of her life temple. For most women to give spells to live." The sacrifice of Christ is unique, but may we not reverently say, in the words of the writer just quoted, that the war has opened to many souls "something more of the mystery of Calvary, the wondrous giving of the Father, the wondrous self-sacrifice of the Son," Who, in order to achieve our redemption, left His place by the throne of His Father, tabernacled in mortal flesh, endured and suffered, rising victorious over death and the grave. It is a woman, too, of the last joined of the Allies—Signora Ada Zegri, the Italian poetess of childhood and motherhood—who has expressed in a noble "Prayer" the feelings of women, proud in the sense of their sacrifice:

"Let us pray together, Italian sisters. The time has come for deeds; the time has come for steadfastness. Who among us trembles, or bows her forehead and knees in anguish? Let us pray standing, armed with strength, our eyes fixed upon that which is necessary.

"Let us pray; tearlessly taking leave of our sons or our lovers off to the frontier with pack and rifle, their faces lit with the pride of daring. Never did they seem so beautiful; never did we feel them so strong as when, with a firm voice, we told them 'Go!'

"Let us pray; with untiring hands busy on warm

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wool, or strong worsted, or white gauze lighter than spider's web; or gently dressing the wounded, or watching in the hospitals where human flesh is ceaselessly racked by pain.

"Let us pray; in anguish tightening our muscles and nerves till they be as impassible as a mask, should any one come and say, 'Your dear one has perished in the war'; and may the sacrifice be the more beautiful and acceptable that it has been offered freely.

"Blessed be she who furrows the land and digs the field and looks after the property, and continues the task or the work of him who has left all for the sacred war: let her not remain idle for a day nor an hour; let her whole life be consecrated and illumined by the power of her devotion.

"Let our souls stand firmly together in this hour of stress, and our hearts beat in unison. Let one be the meaning of life, one the revelation of sorrow-love. For perchance no greater hour may ever be.

"She will have prayed best who has given most, whose heart has felt most deeply."

The noble army of serving women have given their skill, their toil, and their endurance in no calculating spirit. But the statement is not to be contradicted when it is added—and this is the third point—that for all that they have done and endured, for all that they are doing and enduring, they look for an assured reward, a priceless consolation. That reward and consolation consist in the coming of good to others. They will share in it as the nation will share in it. For we cannot but believe that great good will come out of this devouring and devastating war. The Bishop of Durham expressed his regret that the call to national prayer at the beginning of 1915 did not include a

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more definite call to humiliation before God—"not for wrongs in respect of the war, but for our sins as a nation against purity, and temperance, and goodwill, against the Word, and Worship, and Day, of the God Who has been so good to England." May we not confidently hope that the British Empire, when it emerges from this seven-times-heated furnace of death, suffering, wounds, loss, and sorrow, will be a more sober, righteous, and godly Empire than it was before we were called upon to endure this heavy affliction?—more pure, more temperate, of a finer disposition, less Sabbath-breaking, less neglectful of the House of God, less indifferent to the Word of God.

Surely these are not ill-founded hopes. Dr. Bury, the Bishop of Northern and Central Europe, who has a valuable knowledge of the whole field of operations, has declared that "this awful struggle, with its immense loss of men, widespread suffering, and deepest mourning and sympathy, must bring men to their knees before God, whether they live in England, France, Belgium, Russia, or Germany; it must make the serious matters of life become more prominent in men's minds and cause small things to appear in their true light. Yes, there will be tremendous issues for good out of this terrible evil, of that I am as sure as I am of anything." The evils and suffering caused by the war have made people increasingly ready to receive the Gospel story again with pleasure and gratitude. They are being driven back to this fortress and strength as their only true and confident hope. The Lord God is the Sovereign of His universe and His Son, Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of men.

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